The Plays of The San Francisco Mime Troupe

2000 – 2016

The Bush/Obama Years

"The Dopey-Hopey-Changey-Droney Era"

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First things first:

From the Encyclopedia Britannica:

"**Mime and pantomime:** Latin **mimus and pantomimus**, Greek **mimos and pantomimos**, in the strict sense, a Greek and Roman dramatic entertainment representing scenes from life, often in a ridiculous manner."

Mime doesn't have to be silent, and the Tony and OBIE award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe is anything but quiet. They mean 'mime' in the ancient sense: to mimic. They talk, they sing, they speak Truth to Power, and as is clear from this anthology of plays they make a lot of noise!

And to make this work accessible to the broadest possible audience; the Mime Troupe primarily performs its shows at a price everyone can afford: FREE.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe creates and produces socially relevant, activist theater about the burning issues of our time; plays that make sense out of the headlines by identifying the social, political, and economic forces that shape our lives. Using musical comedy, satire, irony, and slapstick The Troupe dramatizes the operation of these giant forces from a Working Class rather than Capitalist Class perspective, making their audiences feel the impact of political events on a personal level, as well as imparting a class consciousness. The goal of The Troupe has always been to Entertain, Inform, and Activate it's audience, hilariously analyzing the hypocrisies of Capitalism, Imperialism, Racism, Sexism, Xenophobia - and revealing those who benefit from keeping the Working Class fighting amongst itself. Melodramas, spy thrillers, musical comedies, epic histories, sitcoms, cartoon epics - The Troupe's trademark style draws from all these genres and is based on their common elements: strong story line, and an avowed point of view. These are the universal elements of popular theater, understood by everyone The Troupe has performed for: from academics gathered on a Midwestern U.S. campus to an audience of the incarcerated in a high security prison, from Central Valley students in California to a street in Bogota, from the Kennedy Center and off - Broadway, a theatre in the West Bank or Berlin, to a crowd of working women on a plaza in Hong Kong.

This Anthology is of the shows from the beginning of the new millennium, a period which started with the election of an American President who didn't win the popular vote, and ends just before the election of another American President… who didn't win the popular vote. (Interestingly the final show in this anthology, SCHOOLED, has the character representing Donald Trump win his election four months before the actual Donald Trump declared victory.)

Each one of these shows represents a radical counterpunch to current events: the anti-environmentalist movement, corporate personhood, the propaganda and war hysteria leading up to and subsequent Capitalist pillaging after the invasion of Iraq, the rise of American Theocracy, the impoverishment, disempowerment, and undermining of the American Working Class, the stifling

of dissent through finance and the corporate media, the power of Big Oil, the institutionalized racism of our justice system, and how those with money and power have hijacked the hard-fought for common wealth of the Workers who built this country, privatizing for their profit a government designed to be Of, By, and For the People.

And they've done it all with musical comedy.

History

The San Francisco Mime Troupe is a Collective - meaning that instead of an Artistic Director a Collective of actors, directors, writers, musicians, and designers are responsible for the overall artistic direction of the company. And long before the word "multicultural" entered the language, the SFMT was a multiracial company to reflect the complexity of America's present reality, and to state our hope for a multicultural, equitable, future.

The company that became the San Francisco Mime Troupe Troupe was founded in 1959 by R.G. Davis as an experimental project of the now-legendary Actors' Workshop. The ensemble's first pieces were silent--not pantomime, but movement "Events" with visual art elements and music, as an experimental project.

As the Civil Rights, Women's Rights, and the anti-imperialist movements gained traction in post-Red Scare America Davis began exploring a spoken, but still movement-based form: commedia dell'arte as a platform for a new theatre of social justice, using the popular theater of the Italian Renaissance, played by stock characters in masks. In l962, The Mime Troupe took a commedia play, THE DOWRY, outdoors for a single performance in San Francisco's Washington Square Park. The following year, the city's Recreation and Park Commission denied the Troupe a permit to perform, on grounds of "obscenity". The ensuing court case, won by the Troupe, established the right of artists to perform uncensored in the city's parks.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe has opened a new show in the parks every summer since.

SAN FRANCISCO
MIME TROUPE
Never silent.
Always off center.

The Plays of
The San Francisco Mime Troupe
2000 - 2016

2000 Eating It

2001 1600 Transylvania Avenue

2002 Mr. Smith Goes To Obscuristan

2003 Veronique of the Mounties

2004 Showdown at Crawford Gulch

2005 Doing Good

2006 GodFellas

2007 Making A Killing

2008 Red State

2009 Too Big To Fail

2010 Posibilidad

2011 2012: The Musical!

2012 For The Greater Good

2013 Oil and Water

2014 Ripple Effect

2015 Freedomland

2016 Schooled

Biographies

Edited by Michael Gene Sullivan

“I was raised in the sleepy suburbs around New York City in the 50s and 60s. I went to college at NYU because I wanted excitement and to be exposed to new adventures. I soon discovered that New York was a city of surprises . You never knew what you would discover. Hovey Burgess told me about a theater troupe from San Francisco that would be appearing in Central Park. He said the troupe was notable because it took its inspiration from the commedia dell'arte. The troupe used a physical form of theater, comedy, acting and music to communicate political ideas to the audience and he very much wanted to go. I jumped at the chance.

I was completely unprepared for what I was to see. The year was 1967 and I saw "L'Amant Militaire." I had never seen such explosive energy and physicality and guts in a show before! It was bawdy, it was outrageous, it was funny and it was extremely effective in getting its message across! I had never seen anything remotely like it before. Over the years to the present day I go to the Mime Troupe for enlightenment, for passion and commitment to justice and a way of viewing current events.

I've never been disappointed in this quest. I leave the Mime Troupe each time with information and hope. I think that this is such an important thing for people to remember. No matter how bleak things appear, there is always something one can do to make things better. You always have recourse.

I just glanced at the astonishing number of shows that the Mime Troupe has mounted since 1959 to the present day. Whether it's about education or immigration or taking a new perspective on injustice or you name it, the Mime Troupe cuts to the heart of the issue. The audience sees a spirited show with multi talented performers.

The company manages to blend movement, music, dance, action, acting and ideas seamlessly into a unified show. The importance of its existence cannot be overestimated. More than once after becoming disheartened by events, I've been shaken out of the feeling of hopelessness and spurred to action by watching the Mime Troupe. They give voice to those who are "invisible" in our society and should never be silenced. This important theatrical tradition needs to be preserved and revered.

it is to its credit that the Mime Troupe's credit that they keep experimenting with telling their stories.

In Freedomland – the production from three years ago – to make their point of view crystal clear they even gave the show a tragic ending encouraged by the increasing militarization of the police force, the fear mongering pitting citizens against people of color as suspected drug dealers, and the feeling that it is safer to fight in Afghanistan than to remain in the US.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe continues to rip the headlines from the paper and said as it continued with "Schooled." This is the story of a manipulative power-hungry demigod seeking to privatize a school in order to indoctrinate the students with his agenda and the forces that support real education that try to thwart him. This show came before Trump and Betsy DeVoss.

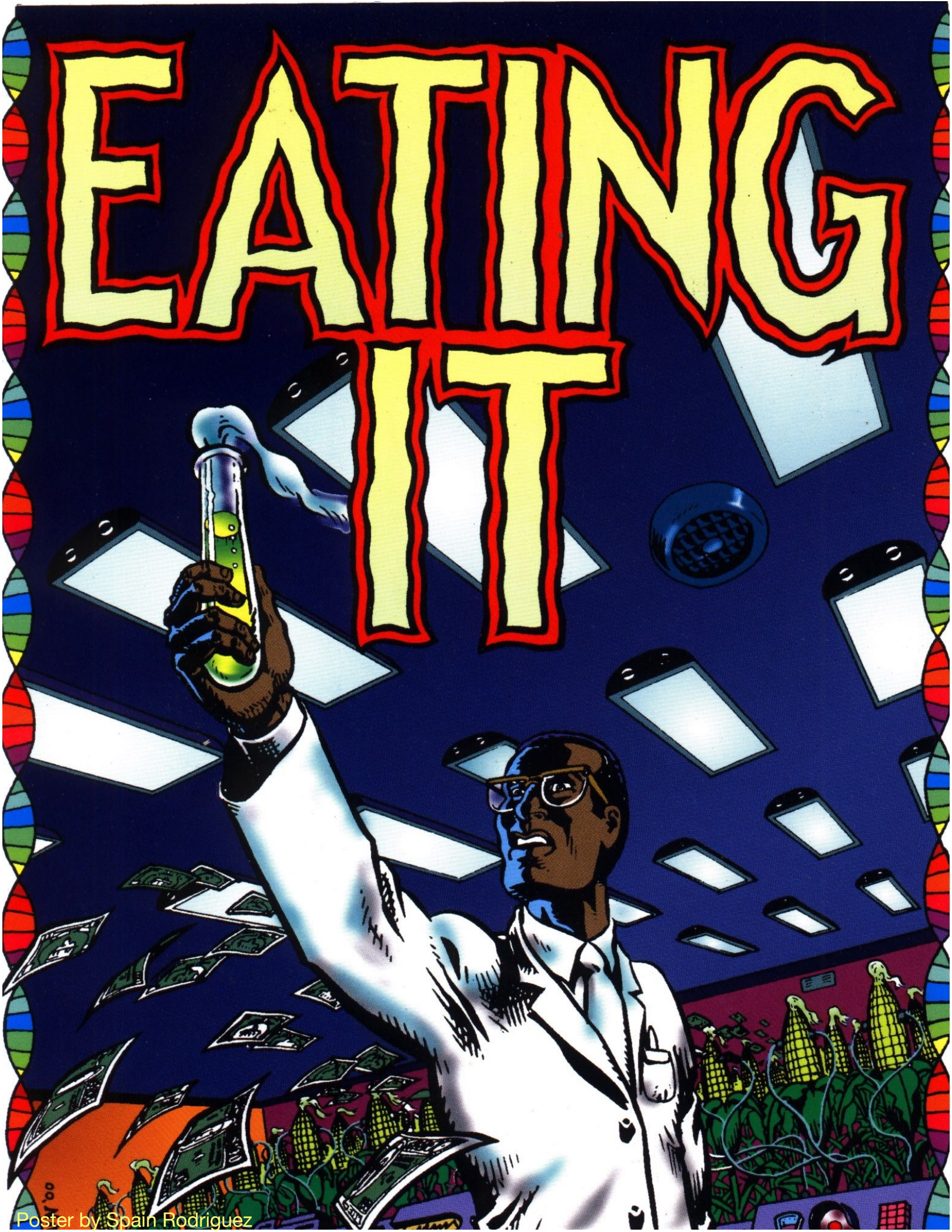
And finally their 2017 show – "Walls" – deals with the latest crackdown on illegal immigration as disparate people from different cultures living in the US come up against the strict adherence to the law which causes a heartbreaking deportation as an ICE agent watches helplessly as her lover is deported in an atmosphere of increasing xenophobia and paranoia.

These three productions illustrate the travesties perpetrated by people who are in power, as people without a voice suffer. The Mime Troupe puts a human face on these people who mostly are relegated to statistics. They are the voice of reason crying in what looks increasingly like a wilderness. These voices are silenced at the peril of all of us”

JUDY FINELLI, CO-FOUNDER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL FOR CIRCUS ARTS AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE PICKLE FAMILY CIRCUS.

Eating It

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan, Bruce Barthol, Ellen Callas
Lyrics and Music by Bruce Barthol



Poster by Spain Rodriguez

Ah, science.

Rocket ships, and strange quarks, distant black holes and splitting atoms, recording gamma bursts and reorganizing DNA in such a way as to create horrifying mutations which - uncontrolled - could irreversibly poison our world and destroy life as we know it.

Ah, science.

In the late ’90’s genetically modified foods (GMO’s) were all the rage - in that people were really pissed about them. Corporations were rushing to patent all the life forms they could sequence, and create food that was pest resistant. When it turned out pest resistant sometimes meant could kill you if you ate it the corporations like Monsanto had two brilliant ideas: First create a weed and pest killer so strong nothing could survive it, and second genetically modify plants to be specifically resistant to that weed and pest killer. Brilliant! And what if they plants were infertile, so the farmers couldn’t harvest any seeds for the next season, so they have to buy more? Even more brilliant! And what if Monsanto could use its influence with the U.S. government and the IMF to insist that developing countries buy their seeds and financially punish any farmer who refused? Stop with the brilliance!

And what if they did all of this before they even finished testing the foods or the pest killer, before they know the long term effects on the environment or the food chain? What if their plants cross pollinated with wild plants? What happens to the pollinators - like the bees? What ever happened to the Precautionary Principal in science? Just because you can do something does not mean you should. Even if it will be profitable. And in this fast-paced, future/present, time-traveling sci-fi thriller ethics comes face-to-face with the Marketplace.

Ah, profit-driven science.

"Eating It" is a nutritious entertainment - short (65 minutes), timely, funny, provocative, sharply staged and beautifully performed. It just goes to show the continual wonders of splicing hot political issues with the unique skills of the San Francisco Mime Troupe.”
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

“I’m sitting in a park having newly arrived to the San Francisco Bay Area and witnessing an amazing production. Marvelously talented actors have the audience enthralled as they use the backdrop of a sci-fi musical to address the effects of genetically modified crops in a comedic style as informative as it is compelling. Nearly two decades later I can look back and see just how absolutely prophetic the play was in its depiction of the pursuit of profit over people, and the unintended consequences such modification might have. What a wonderful introduction to the caliber, content and quality of this historic organization and the region. Thank you San Francisco Mime Troupe!”

ALDO BILLINGSLEA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, LORRAINE HANSBERRY THEATRE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Phalox
Old Albright
Chloe
Director
Jay Witherspoon III
Bapa Du Da
Young Albright (Isaac)
Bob Murtaugh
Dr. Synthia Bloom
Dr. Fine
Dr. Howard
Dr. Freddy Esperanza
Stick
Carl
Security Guard #1
Security Guard #2
COP

EATING IT opened on July 4th, 2000, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California. The production was directed by Dan Chumley with the following cast:

Phalox, Director, Dr. Freddy Esperanza, Stick.....Keiko Shimosato*
Old Albright, Issac (Young Albright)……..Michael Gene Sullivan*
Chloe, Dr. Synthia Bloom.....Velina Brown*
Jay Witherspoon III, Dr. Fine, Fred Berta, Security Guard 1....Amos Glick
Bob Murtaugh, Carl.....Ed Holmes
Bapa Du Da, Dr. Howard, Security Guard …….Victor Toman
Sound Technician, Cop 1.....Greg Tate
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

INSIDE OF A FUTURISTIC SURVIVAL DOME.

In the future. In a dome environment with desolate exterior landscape seen through a large window. OLD DR. ALBRIGHT, enters. He is an ancient black men wearing long, flowing lab coat, and with an air of exhaustion and exhilaration about him as he punches buttons on a small keypad on the back of his glove. A trapdoor in the floor opens, and out rises a complex helmet contraption. OLD ALBRIGHT beams triumphantly.

OLD ALBRIGHT

It's finished!

PHALOX, a robot, enters

PHALOX

Dr. Albright, time to take your life extender pill.

OLD ALBRIGHT

Not now Phalox! All these years and it's finally done!

PHALOX

Your time machine?

OLD ALBRIGHT

All these long years of waiting for this moment. For the chance to go back...

PHALOX

I am happy that you no longer will be sad, Dr. Albright.

OLD ALBRIGHT

Of course when I go into the past and change things, you will no longer exist, Phalox.

PHALOX

Then again, maybe this is not such a great idea...

CHLOE, ALBRIGHT'S teenage daughter, enters. She is clearly a disaffected, bitter youth of the future.

OLD ALBRIGHT

(Brightens)

Chloe, my daughter! The time machine is finished! Now you'll be able to see the world when it was beautiful.

Unseen by ALBRIGHT CHLOE pulls a small digital tablet out of her pocket, begins to read it.

CHLOE

(reading)

"A barren wasteland, dark acid clouds".

OLD ALBRIGHT
No, no. The way it used to be. Bright blue skies. Warm sun. Crystal clear water. Birds.

CHLOE
(reading)
"The aggressive nature of the plant caused near total destruction of the native flora, resulting in the rapid destabilization of..."

ALBRIGHT sees the device, tries to grab it from CHLOE.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Give me that!

CHLOE eludes ALBRIGHT's grasp.

CHLOE
I wanted to see what you've been writing every night for as long as I can remember!

OLD ALBRIGHT
You had no right!

CHLOE
You had no right! You lied to me. This is all your fault! Living in a dome... outside toxic clouds cover the sun. Inside-no one but talking machinery.

PHALOX
Chloe...

CHLOE
Shut down, Phalox.

PHALOX shuts down

OLD ALBRIGHT
We'll go back. With the time machine! You'll meet your mother..

CHLOE
You mean "the egg donor". She was dead before I was even conceived. I'm just another experiment!

OLD ALBRIGHT
She and I... She...

CHLOE
-did not die in a freak lab accident!!
(reads)
"My darling Synthia, please forgive me, you were right and I was terribly, terribly wrong."

CHLOE accusingly holds tablet out to OLD ALBRIGHT, who now reluctantly takes it.

OLD ALBRIGHT

I was wrong. But that was a different me. (rushes to time machine) Phalox switch on! (PHALOX switches back on) Adjust the worm hole deflectors.

OLD ALBRIGHT and PHALOX work feverishly on the time machine .

OlD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)

You'll see, Chloe. I'll take you back and there you'll be happy...

CHLOE

How could I? Knowing that all that beauty, all that, would eventually become (indicating the world) this. This experiment is over!

CHLOE, unseen by OLD ALBRIGHT, slips out the dome

OLD ALBRIGHT

I only saw myself, not the big picture... only what I wanted and not what the world needed. I just need to set the chrono-trajectory and calibrate the matter consolidator. Chloe. Chloe? (LOOKS UP) Phalox find Chloe.

Through the window we see CHLOE outside the dome, embracing the toxic air. She convulses.

PHALOX

Oh my stars! Air lock! Went through it! Logic jammed! I am not programmed for this event!

OLD ALBRIGHT

Chloe.. went.. outside?

PHALOX

Affirmative, Dr. Albright. Your daughter has left the building.

OLD ALBRIGHT

I've got to go out there and get her-

PHALOX

No Doctor!

Through the window OLD ALBRIGHT and PHALOX see CHLOE collapse and die.

PHALOX (cont'd)

The lethal bacteria in the pollen gases have already caused her life force to fail.

OLD ALBRIGHT crumbles.

PHALOX (cont'd)

I'm... (scanning for the right word) ...sorry.

OLD ALBRIGHT

(weeping)

Chloe! I'm too late.

Picks up digital tablet. and holds it to his heart

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)
I have nothing left...

PHALOX
That is incorrect, Doctor. You have your inventions. Me - I always require reprogramming.

OLD ALBRIGHT is suddenly struck with an idea.

OLD ALBRIGHT
I'll go back! I'll go back right now!

OLD ALBRIGHT snaps alert, runs to time machine, starts turning dials

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)
Back to the exact moment when everything changed. I'll fix it and I'll deliver this message in person. (puts digital tablet. in pocket)

PHALOX
But sir- the safety concerns!

OLD ALBRIGHT
It's just a chance I'll have to take!

OLD ALBRIGHT lifts the helmet section of the time machine machine off it's stand and strapping it on his head, and starts the time machine up.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Wish me luck, Phalox!

PHALOX
But what about me? That's it? Don't leave me in this dome alone!

Plastic dome and rest of set begins to fly apart, disappearing.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Synthia, here I come!

OLD ALBRIGHT disappears along with PHALOX, the dome the blasted world, which is replaced with the world circa 2000 AD.

SCENE 2

A SOUNDSTAGE.

An obviously face backdrop depicts a straw hut in an impoverished Third World country. In front of the hut is a smiling, well-dressed man, GOVERNOR JAY WITHERSPOON II. He is standing next to a small child, dressed in tatters, BAPA DU DA. Maudlin music plays as WITHERSPOON, with a slight country accent, speaks. There is a sound technician holding a boom mic, and a COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR framing the shot..

DIRECTOR

And... action!!!

WITHERSPOON

Hi folks. Jay Witherspoon II here in the tiny, impoverished country of Quatsala. Why? Well, I'm here for the children. Hungry children, like little Bapa Du Da. (to BAPA) Hello there little fella.

BAPA

(with an non-specific Third World accent)

Hi.

WITHERSPOON

How are you?

BAPA

I'm hungry.

WITHERSPOON

'Course y'are, buckaroo. (to camera) If only Bapa's papa could grow enough food to feed his family. But harvests in Quatsala are small, and the traditional crops aren't nutritious enough to keep a growing boy healthy. So next Tuesday, on his birthday, little Bapa here will die of starvation.

BAPA

What?

WITHERSPOON

American's care about starvation in Quatsala. I care. I care about children waking up hungry, going to school hungry, going to bed hungry, and ...dammit now, I'm hungry!

DIRECTOR

Cut!

Music stops. JAY relaxes as a make-up person touches up BAPA

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

Certainly Governor, the buffet is right this way.

WITHERSPOON

(now with an upper-class accent)

You know I haven't eaten since brunch.

DIRECTOR
Five minutes break, people!

DIRECTOR and WITHERSPOON exit as an older, distinguished man, BOB MURTAUGH, CEO of BobCo, and young ISAAC ALBRIGHT enter. ISAAC is slick, well-dressed, and has the energy of a man aimed at success (and is played by the same actor as OLD ALBRIGHT.).

ISAAC
What'd I tell you, Bob? Isn't this the perfect commercial to kick of the SuperCorn campaign?

BOB
Some poor kid dying on his mud futon? What's this have to do with us?

ISAAC
First we need SuperCorn approved by the FDA, skip the field tests...

BOB
Don't worry - half those guys used to work for me.

ISAAC
Then we need it fast tracked by Congress. So we need to get every bleeding heart American to apply a little pressure.

BOB
(getting the idea)
Poor little Bapa, choking on an iguana, and the only thing that can save him is...

ISAAC
SuperCorn!

BOB
Brilliant! Then I sell 'em the only herbicide that will kill the weeds and leaves your genetically engineered SuperCorn standing - BOBCO's Weed Butcher 2000!

ISAAC
Yeah, but don't say genetically engineered.

BOB
Why not?

ISAAC
People hear that they think mad scientists... chickens with eight drumsticks!

BOB
What is it? Genetically modified?

ISAAC
No.

BOB
Bio-enhanced?

ISAAC

No.

BOB

What, then?

ISAAC

Neo-Natural.

BOB

I like it! Now that's the kind of thinking that made me invest in Albright Laboratories in the first place! When you first asked me to fund your genetically engineered...

ISAAC

Ah...

BOB

Neo-Natural corn research I thought you were just another nut trying to feed the World. But when I saw your business plan I knew you were my kind of scientist. Feed the World, but getting rich doing it.

WITHERSPOON enters eating a huge sandwich.

WITHERSPOON

Bob Murtaugh!

BOB

Jay! Or should I say next President of the United States Witherspoon? Thanks for doing this.

WITHERSPOON

How could I say no to a fellow Yalie? Say Bob this whole commercial thing's squared away with the Presidential Election Committee, right?

BOB

As long as we don't actually tell people to vote for you, this doesn't fall under any campaign finance rules.

ISAAC

Right. It's just you saying you want to help starving children. If people choose to vote for you because of it, that's their business.

BOB

Jay, you know Dr. Isaac Albright?

WITHERSPOON crosses to shake ISAAC'S hand.

WITHERSPOON

Of course I do... the man whose wife invented SuperCorn!

There is a sound sting - it is ISAAC"s reaction to his wife getting credit.

ISAAC
(annoyed)
Dr. Bloom and I invented it together...

WITHERSPOON
Up from the ghetto, make something of yourself...

ISAAC
Actually, my parents taught at Cornell...

WITHERSPOON
Whatever.

DIRECTOR
Places!

DIRECTOR takes WITHERSPOON's sandwich, tosses it away.

BOB
I just had a thought: What if Jay (waves at GOV. JAY, who waves back) falls behind in the polls?

ISAAC
We shoot a commercial with the other guy.

DIRECTOR
Okay, take it from "Government bureaucrats..."

BOB
Jay! Heavier on the accent.

DIRECTOR
Quiet on the set! And... action!

MUSIC STARTS

WITHERSPOON
(with an increased country accent)
Government bureaucrats say we need years of testing before vitamin enriched Neo-Natural seeds can be sent to Quatsala, seeds that could save little Bapa's life. What do you say, Bapa?

BAPA
(to camera)
Save me, America!

WITHERSPOON kneels, an arm around BAPA'S shoulders.

WITHERSPOON
Call your congress person, and tell 'em to cut the red tape. Let's get those seeds to little Bapa's papa, or else...

BAPA
No more happy birthdays for me.

VOICE
Brought to you by... People Against Starving Children.

Music swells with emphatic emotion.

DIRECTOR
And... cut!

BAPA stands up, revealing hisself to be an adult actor who was performing on his knees.

BAPA
Outta my way! I've got a 2:30 callback for Nash Bridges! (or some current television show.)

BAPA exits.

DIRECTOR
Okay, that's a wrap, people! Remember - call is 6:30 tomorrow morning to shoot the Spanish version!

DIRECTOR exits.

WITHERSPOON
Roberto? (JAY and BOB do big synchronized golf swings) Mañana!

WITHERSPOON exits, practicing his Spanish lines.

WITHERSPOON (cont'd)
" Ola folks. Jay Witherspoon II aquí en el pequeño y empobrecido país de Quatsala..."

ISAAC
With a friend in the White House SuperCorn will get fast tracked through committee, and we'll be ready in time for the next World Food Conference!

BOB
Isaac, about the Conference...

ISAAC
Government agencies and food distributors from around the world will be there. Ordering our seeds, buying your herbicides... We'll make billions!

BOB
That's what I came to tell you... the Conference has been moved up!

ISAAC
What?

BOB
It's going to be a month earlier! Something about Super Bowl Tickets. Do you think you'll be ready in time?

ISAAC
Synthia says we just have a few more test to do.

BOB
Just a few more tests... (music sting) just a few more months... (music sting) that's what she said before the last Conference! And you remember what happened?

ISAAC
(chagrined)
The Quantum Carrot!

BOB
They got to the Conference on time, while Synthia was still testing your SuperCarrot, and now every carrot patch from here to Rangoon is growin' Quantum Carrots.

ISAAC
We needed more money to finish our project on time.

BOB
What's the point of my putting up money for half the patents on nothing?

ISAAC
Another 10 million and we'll be ready! Come on, Bob... after the Conference we're going to be the Microsoft of Genetic Engineering.

BOB
And you're the black Bill Gates? Well, if you can't deliver before the Conference I might just have to make a change...

BOB pulls out a cellphone, starts to threateningly dial.

ISAAC
You want to make a change? Go ahead, Bob. You make a change.

ISAAC pulls out his own cellphone, starts to dial.

ISAAC (cont'd)
Companies are lined up to back Albright Laboratories. Everyone wants a piece of SuperCorn. (on phone) Hello STEVECO? This is Isaac Albright. Yes, may I speak to Steve?

BOB
But if SuperCorn's not finished...

ISAAC
(to BOB)
10 million more and it will be. (into phone) Steve, Isaac here. How're Tina and the kids - still growing? No, not Tina, the kids -

BOB
Alright! You got it!

ISAAC

(into phone) Can you hold for a second? (to BOB) And for the rush I think we deserve another 50 thousand in Bobco stock. (BOB hesitates, so ISAAC continues into phone) Steve what are you doing for lunch?

BOB

(defeated)

You've got a deal!

ISAAC

(into phone) Sorry, something's come up Steve, maybe next week. (hangs up) You just take care of the FDA tests, leave the rest to me.

BOB exits, as ISAAC revels in his power.

Song: "THIS IS MY TIME"

ISAAC (cont'd)

THAT FELT GOOD, THIS FEELS RIGHT,

I LIKE THE VIEW FROM THESE HEIGHTS!

WITH THE ELITE, WHERE I SET MY SIGHTS,

THIS IS MY TIME, AND MY TIMING IS RIGHT!

I PAID MY DUES, BACK IN SCHOOL,

I WAS A NERD, THEY CALLED ME FOOL!

A POCKET PROTECTOR, THE KIDS WERE CRUEL.

BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED, NOW IT'S THE NERDS WHO RULE!

AND THIS FORMER SCIENCE GEEK

IS RE-DEFINING COOL!

THAT FELT GOOD!

ISAAC exits, triumphant.

SCENE 3

A LAB AT ALBRIGHT RESEARCH.

The stage explodes into a flurry of activity. in a choreographed manner DR. HOWARD & DR. FINE - in lab coats, googles, and gloves - prepare for an experiment they are clearly very excited about. Their movements are synchronized but not robotic as they work. The music is interspersed with their exclamations.

HOWARD
Fire up the nano monitor!

FINE
Prepare the plasmids!

BOTH
Get me those slides!

HOWARD
Isolation complete!

FINE
Calibrating the bovine barometer!

HOWARD
Sequencing complete!

BOTH
Launch the ferry!

FINE
Tungsten pellets readied for gene coating!

HOWARD
Marker genes!

FINE
Promoter is ready!

BOTH
Insertion!!!

DR. FINE
-5-4-3-2-1!!!

Sound cue of machine working - bings like a microwave. DRS. HOWARD & FINE open it up and extract their experiment - look at it & then each other in amazement. DR. SYNTHIA BLOOM enters. She is a black woman, very much the proud, driven scientist.

DR. HOWARD
(disappointed)
It didn't work. Our dream of crossing corn genes with cow genes-

DR. FINE
Our dream of self-buttered corn-

Victor Toman as DR. FINE, , Amos Glick as DR. HOWARD Photo by David Allen

DRS. FINE & HOWARD

We failed.

SYNTHIA

Self buttered corn?

HOWARD and FINE see SYNTHIA, and are clearly in awe of her.

DR. FINE

We could patent it!

DR. HOWARD

We could dominate the microwave popcorn market!

SYNTHIA

Come now gentlemen, self buttered corn is not our mission. Our goal is to feed the world! We've had many successes. So far our new corn has tested positive for drought -

DR. HOWARD

Pest -

DR. FINE

And viral resistance.

SYNTHIA

And the results of the boosted vitamin content are exceeding expectations. Now to test the fast growing component.

DRS. HOWARD & FINE

Yes, Doctor!

INTERCOM

Dr. Bloom - There's a Dr. Esperanza to see you.

SYNTHIA

Wonderful!

HOWARD and FINE are even in more awe.

DRS. HOWARD & FINE

<u>The</u> Dr. Esperanza?

SYNTHIA

Yes, she was my mentor at UC Davis. Send her in, please.

DR. FINE

Do you think you could introduce us?

SYNTHIA

You two can take a break.

DR. HOWARD

But, but, but, but....

DR. ESPERANZA enters. she is an older, very distinguished non-white woman. DRS. HOWARD and FINE are beside themselves with awe.

DR. FINE
Dr. Esperanza, this is the greatest moment of my life!

DR.HOWARD
I love your column in G.Q.

DR. ESPERANZA
Ah yes, Geneticists Quarterly. It seems the underwriters, especially BOBCO, no longer like what I am writing.

SYNTHIA
We'll resume with Series QZ.

DRS. HOWARD & FINE
Yes, Doctor. *(to DR. ESPERANZA)* Doctor. *(to both)* Doctors!

FINE and HOWARD exit, still awed

SYNTHIA
Grad students.

DR. ESPERANZA
Synthia, my prize pupil!

ESPERANZA moves to SYNTHIA, throws her arms open. to SYNTHIA

SYNTHIA
Freddie, it's been too long. How are things back in Quatsala?

DR. ESPERANZA
Not good at all. But this is a beautiful facility.

SYNTHIA
Isaac is a genius with the business end. He got Bob Murtaugh of BOBCO to underwrite the lab. I don't know how he does it but he just makes things happen.

DR. ESPERANZA
Does he still cut corners on his testing like in school?

SYNTHIA
Are you still mad because he swept your best research assistant of her feet?... I heard you're no longer at the Institute. I'm sorry.

DR. ESPERANZA
Yes, the Institute and I have parted ways.

SYNTHIA
What happened?

DR. ESPERANZA

The funders put us under great pressure to release to the market our new genetically enhanced, pesticide resistant Fava Bean.

SYNTHIA

The triple yield bean? That's going to change peoples lives.

DR. ESPERANZA

There were problems. Synthia, I am here today because I heard of your latest experiments.

SYNTHIA

My SuperCorn?

DR. ESPERANZA

Your SuperCorn. You must ask yourself: is there really a need for this newest miracle?

SYNTHIA

Of course there is. Countless people die because of crop failure. My grandparents lost their farm to sweet potato root rot...

DR. ESPERANZA

I have changed my focus of study to the genetic relationships of the natural interdependencies. In small plots. Sustainable agriculture.

SYNTHIA

Organic farming? (Chuckles, then sees Esperanza was serious) Doctor... Freddie, we are not doing anything different with plants than humans have been doing for thousands of years. We can just do it better and faster.

Song: "SERVANT OF SCIENCE

DR. ESPERANZA

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN

IS NOT TO SAY YOU SHOULD.

THERE ARE REPERCUSSIONS

THAT CANNOT BE ANTICIPATED!

SYNTHIA

SHE THINK MY WORK IS DANGEROUS! IT IS NOT,

SHE MAY BE FILLED WITH FEAR, BUT I'M NOT!

I'M NOT AFRAID TO SAIL ON UNCHARTED SEAS

I'M WORKING JUST LIKE MENDEL IN HIS PATCH OF

PEAS.

AM I AFRAID TO FOLLOW WHERE MY RESEARCH

LEADS?

NO! ABSOLUTELY NOT!

SYNTHIA(cont'd)

WE DO THE MOST CAREFUL TESTING,

AND THE WORLD POPULATION INCREASES

FORCE US

TO DEVELOP QUICKLY

NEW AND SAFER WAYS

TO GROW

THE FOOD WE NEED.

DR. ESPERANZA

THE RECKLESSNESS OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SEE

GAVE THE WORLD ASBESTOS AND DDT!

THE SERVANT OF SCIENCE, SO RIGHTEOUS AND

NOBLE

SHOULD TAKE A STROLL AROUND CHERNOBYL!

DR. ESPERANZA (cont'd)

Do you understand your role as a servant of the
greatest power on earth?

SYNTHIA

THE POWER OF CREATION?

DR. ESPERANZA

Market domination!

SHE DOES NOT KNOW FOR WHOM SHE TOILS

AND THAT THEY WANT TO OWN THE WATER, AIR

AND SOIL!

THEY CLAIM THEY'LL MAKE A WORLD OF MILK AND

HONEY,

BUT THEY WILL RISK THE WORLD FOR THE LOVE OF

MONEY.

DR. ESPERANZA (cont'd)
Do you really believe BOBCO will let you control your creations?
Or that Bob Murtaugh will allow you to do good, careful science
If it hurts the bottom line?
You cannot know what horrors you may release upon this world!

SYNTHIA

WITHOUT MY RESEARCH, CAN'T SHE SEE

WE'LL HAVE A FUTURE OF STARVATION AND

MISERY?

CAN'T SHE SEE SHE'S LEAVING SCIENCE IN THE

LURCH?

CAN'T SHE SEE I'M GALILEO, AND SHE'S THE

CHURCH?

CAN'T SHE SEE I'M GALILEO,

AND SHE'S THE CHURCH?

DR. ESPERANZA
The Fava Bean crop failed. Funders and my government would not allow time for site specific testing. The pesticide was ineffective against the local pests. Farmers were left with debts for the seed and pesticide. More than 400 of them committed suicide. Synthia, make sure you do all of the field tests. Don't make the same mistakes I did.

ISAAC enters

ISSAC
Synthia, I...Dr. Esperanza?

DR. ESPERANZA
Hello Isaac.

ISAAC is clearly wary of ESPERANZA, and distrustful of her influence on SYNTHIA.

ISSAC
What are you doing here?

DR. ESPERANZA

I'm on a speaking tour of America, and I just dropped by to see how my old students were doing. But I have an appointment, I must go. Good to see you, Isaac. Goodbye Synthia.

ESPERANZA exits.

ISSAC

The shoot was great! I got 10 million more from Bob, and 50 thousand shares in BOBCO stock. (He sees Synthia is troubled) Are you OK?

SYNTHIA

It's Freddie. She quit the field! She had a disaster with her Fava Bean research. Now she thinks I'm doing bad science.

ISSAC

Synthia, you're twice the scientist Freddie ever was. Just because she failed does not mean we will.

Song: "OUR DREAM"

ISAAC

SINCE I FIRST SAW YOU IN THE GLOW OF A BUNSEN

BURNER,

IN THAT CHEM LAB I COULD SEE YOU WERE A REAL

FAST LEARNER,

I COULD TELL,

I COULD TELL,

WE WERE MEANT TO BE A TEAM.

SYNTHIA

EVEN IN THOSE COLLEGE DAYS,

ISAAC

I KNEW WE'D SET THE WORLD ABLAZE!

BOTH

AND WE'D SURPRISE OUR COLLEAGUES IN

ACADEME.

SYNTHIA

WORKING IN THE LABORATORY DAY AFTER DAY,

ISAAC

AND WORKING FOR SO LITTLE PAY,

SYNTHIA

WE'D DO THE WORLD GOOD

ISAAC

I ALWAYS KNEW WE WOULD,

GET THE MONEY FOR OUR SELF-RELIANCE,

SYNTHIA

PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE!

BOTH

THIS IS OUR DREAM,

AND WE ARE A DREAM TEAM!

THIS IS OUR DREAM,

AND WE ARE A DREAM TEAM!

SYNTHIA

AND WE HAVE NEVER STRAYED,

ISAAC

AND NOW WE'RE GETTING PAID,

IT'S OUR DREAM.

SYNTHIA

TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE,

ISAAC

AND HAVING A BANK ACCOUNT THAT'S NOT A DISGRACE,

SYNTHIA

WORKING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE!

BOTH

YOU AND ME, YOU AND ME, YOU AND ME!

SYNTHIA

WE'LL DO THE WORLD GOOD,

ISAAC

I ALWAYS KNEW WE WOULD,
GET THE MONEY FOR OUR SELF-RELIANCE,

SYNTHIA

PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE1

BOTH

THIS IS OUR DREAM,
AND WE ARE A DREAM TEAM!
THIS IS OUR DREAM,
AND WE ARE A DREAM TEAM.
THIS IS OUR DREAM,

Michael Gene Sullivan as ISSAAC, Velina Brown as SYNTHIA

AND WE ARE A DREAM TEAM!

SYNTHIA
You're right! And if Dr. Esperanza had a wonderful partner like you she could have funded every test in the book. She thinks I'll skip the field tests? I'll do every test twice.

Sound cue as ISAAC is stunned.

SYNTHIA
I'll add ten extra tests -

Sound cue as ISAAC is stunned, again.

SYNTHIA
and six more months!

Big Sound cue as ISAAC is super stunned.

SYNTHIA
Because when I release our SuperCorn it will be safe and we will feed the world! Thanks honey!

SYNTHIA kisses ISAAC and exits

ISAAC
Synthia! (horrified) A few more months...

DRS. FINE and HOWARD enter, and begin to work. ISAAC sees them.

ISAAC (cont'd)
Gentlemen! You are going to be putting in a lot of overtime!

ISAAC stares down the two cowed scientists, then he exits.

SCENE 4

THE STREET OUTSIDE THE ALBRIGHT LABORATORIES.

CARL, an enthusiastic environmental activist, and DR. ESPERANZA enter. CARL talks to audience as if they were crowd at demonstration.

CARL

Alright, Brothers and Sisters, I want to thank you all for coming out on such short notice! This is what democracy looks like! Let's hear it for the e-mail tree! That's technology working for the people! We're here because behind these walls Bob Murtaugh and Governor Witherspoon are shooting another of their starvation in Quatsala commercials! Well, today we have a scientist from Quatsala who's crossed the barricades to tell us what's really going down! Representing Scientists for Social Responsibility, Dr. Freddie Esperanza!

DR. ESPERANZA

Thank you all very much. I would like to tell you the truth about my country. We farm small plots in Quatsala. Rice, millet, papaya trees. We have always had enough food. But during your Cold War we had to buy weapons from you, to prove ourselves faithful allies in your fight against Communism. Now we have old jet fighters, rusting tanks, and a national debt. Without cash we must pay our debt to you in food. So now entire valleys are filled with genetically altered soy to feed your cattle. There is starvation in Quatsala. We do not need genetically altered food - we need debt relief! We need the freedom to grow crops that will feed our own people! Today I must return to Quatsala where there is much work to do. I am sorry to be so brief but I must return there today. I ask you all to continue fighting the good fight! Thank you. No more genetically altered food! (ESPERANZA exits)

CARL

Thank you, Dr. Esperanza. Everybody - Hey hey, ho ho, International Monetary Fund Imperialism has got to go! (tries to repeat, fails to find workable rhythm) Okay! Next we have a couple of family farmers from up north who are being sued by BOBCO. Brothers and Sisters - let's welcome Fred and Al Berta!

FRED and AL, two farmers from Canada come to the mic. they are dress in overalls and cowboy hats - all very different from the urban warrior gear of CARL. they have heavy Canadian accents.

AL

Thank you. We been farming wheat up North for aboot thirty years, never had a problem, hey? Sure, had some bad harvests, and pests...

FRED

Like the cotton borer back in ...

FRED & AL

'72.

AL

Nothin' so bad but we couldn't put food on the table.

FRED
Then the BOBCO comes along, selling some kinda SuperWheat, hey?

AL
Supposed to solve all our problems.

Song:, "BOBCO BLUES"

Al (cont'd)

NOW BOBCO PROMISED WHEAT GOIN' HIGH AS THE SKY,
MAKE A LOT OF MONEY, IT'LL ALL BE GOOD.
BUT IN THAT BOBCO CONTRACT IS THE FARMERS DEEPEST FEAR,
YOU GOT TO BUY NEW SEEDS FROM BOBCO, EVERY YEAR!

FRED AND AL

BUY NEW SEEDS FROM BOBCO, EVERY YEAR!
SAVIN' SEEDS IS WHAT FARMERS HAVE DONE,
FOR MORE THAN TEN MILLENNIUM.
SO WHY IN THE WORLD SHOULD WE HAVE TO PAY,
FOR THE SEEDS THAT NATURE JUST GIVES AWAY?

FRED

BUT MY NEIGHBORS PLANTED BOBCO AND IT STARTED TO GROW,
AND THEN THAT PRAIRIE WIND STARTED TO BLOW,
BOBCO POLLEN WAS IN MY FIELD,
BOBCO POLLEN INFECTIN' MY YIELD.

FRED AND AL

BOBCO POLLEN INFECTIN' MY YIELD.

WE CALLED UP BOBCO AND SAID WHAT'S THE DEAL?

WE Don't WANT YOUR WHEAT NOW IT'S GROWIN' IN

OUR FIELD!

THEN WE HEARD THAT BOBCO MAN SAY,

YOUR GROWIN' SUPERWHEAT, YOUR GONNA PAY!

SAVIN' SEEDS IS WHAT FARMERS HAVE DONE,

FOR MORE THAN TEN MILLENNIUM.

SO WHY IN THE WORLD SHOULD WE HAVE TO PAY,

FOR THE SEEDS THAT NATURE JUST GIVES AWAY?

WE TOLD BOBCO TO EAT OUR SHORTS!

WE TOLD BOBCO WE'D SEE 'EM IN COURT!

WE TOLD BOBCO KEEP OFF OUR GRASS!

WE TOLD BOBCO TO KISS OUR ASS!

ALL

JUST TELL BOBCO TO KISS YOUR ASS!

JUST TELL BOBCO TO KISS YOUR ASS!

JUST TELL BOBCO TO KISS YOUR ASS!

Suddenly RIOT COPS enter.

COP 1

This is an illegal assembly! You do not have a permit! If you do not disperse immediately you will be arrested! I repeat if you do not disperse immediately you will be arrested!

CARL

We're not going anywhere, hey! We have the constitutional right to assembly!

COP 1

You got a constitutional right to this!

COP 1 advances toward CARL. CARL fends of the COP while everyone else exits. COP 1 pepperspraysCARL and the area, then chases CARL off stage. Suddenly there is a flash and a bang, and OLD ALBRIGHT appears seemingly out of nowhere.

OLD ALBRIGHT
(exultant)
It worked!

OLD ALBRIGHT takes a deep breath of what he assumes is fresh air, but inhales pepperspray, and has coughing spasm.

OLD ALBRIGHT
What happened? Where am I? L.A.?

OLD ALBRIGHT picks up discarded protest sign which reads "STOP THE CORPORATE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE" to wave smoke away. He notices something in sky .

OLD ALBRIGHT
What's that. Why... its... the sun! And blue sky! Trees! Birds! People outside without biosuits on!

SECURITY GUARD 1 & SECURITY GUARD 2 enter in gas masks. They see OLD ALBRIGHT waving protest sign.

SECURITY GUARD 1 & SECURITY GUARD 2
What the....?

OLD ALBRIGHT
Ah! Security officers! Excuse me, I'm am in need of directions... its been sometime since I've been here, could you direct me to the Albright laboratories? I am a doctor...

SECURITY GUARD 2
Egghead!

OLD ALBRIGHT
My name is Doctor Isaac...

OLD ALBRIGHT is hit on the head by one, then the other GUARD. Before they can continue beating him they notice something.

SECURITY GUARD 1
Wait... stop! (He points) It's CNN!

GUARDS scurry off. CARL enters with a young, leather-clad woman, STICK, who helps OLD ALBRIGHT.

STICK
Pigs! Beating up an old man...

CARL

Hey, are you okay?

OLD ALBRIGHT is trying to recover from having been hit on the head.

OLD ALBRIGHT

Yes, I think so. Who are you?

STICK

What's you name?

OLD ALBRIGHT

My name is... is...

OLD ALBRIGHT struggles to remember name and mission, fails.

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)

I... can't remember!

STICK

(assuming OLD ALBRIGHT is a long-time activist)

You musta been in the movement a long time. We better get you back to the warehouse.

STICK begins to help OLD ALBRIGHT OFF, he pushes her away.

OLD ALBRIGHT

No! There's something... I have to do...

CARL

What?

OLD ALBRIGHT

I... I... I can't remember!

OLD ALBRIGHT falls weakly into CARL and STICK'S arms.

STICK

Come on with us. We'll take care of you, Old Dude

OLD ALBRIGHT

(exiting)

I can't remember!

TIME PASSES

A SERIES OF LARGE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES ARE MARCHED ACROSS STAGE, SHOWING PASSAGE OF TIME, AND EVENTS.

WITHERSPOON II WINS NOMINATION!

WITHERSPOON II AHEAD LEADS IN POLLS!

WITHERSPOON WINS!

PRESIDENT WITHERSPOON TO ATTEND WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE!

Velina Brown as SYNTHIA Photo by David Allen

SCENE 5

IN ALBRIGHT LABORATORY.

There is a row of small corn plants in a large box upstage. DRS. FINE and HOWARD are hard at work, but seem distracted and worried.

DR. FINE
Where is Dr. Bloom?

DR. HOWARD
She's preparing for the next tests.

DR. FINE
Does she know the Food Conference starts today?

DR. HOWARD
Dr. Bloom is so wrapped up in her work she doesn't know what year it is!

SYNTHIA enters looking haggard. she clearly has not been sleeping.

SYNTHIA
Prepare for series Z 5! Then bring the soil samples up from storage.

DR. FINE
But Dr. Bloom, you have to rest... you haven't slept a full night in weeks.

SYNTHIA
No time for sleep! We're so close, but each time we recombine the genes something unexplained happens. Each solution causes another problem!

DR. HOWARD
You'll fix it, doctor. You're a great scientist.

DR. FINE
And ever since Dr. Esperanza's death in that mysterious plane crash...

Mysterioso music.

SYNTHIA
A great tragedy for science, for all of us.

DR. FINE
You are the best hope for ending hunger.

SYNTHIA
Thank you.

DRS. FINE and HOWARD exit. ISAAC enters. he is in a good, but nervous mood.

ISAAC

Okay, today's the day!

SYNTHIA

What day is that?

ISAAC

The Food Conference! How close are we to finishing?

SYNTHIA

Tell them a few more weeks. Then we'll be ready for the field tests. Don't worry, honey. Once we finish testing everyone will want fast growing, vitamin enriched, herbicide resistant SuperCorn.

ISAAC

By then they'll be growing something else! We have to be first, or we could lose any advantage we have. We could lose everything! (He sees he needs to try a different tactic) Remember our dream? Albright laboratories - not reliant on government grants, or Bob Murtaugh, or anyone! Free to develop a generation of SuperFoods that will end hunger.

SYNTHIA

But releasing a new gene into the environment is not like anything else, Isaac. Once it's in the field there's no turning back!

DR. HOWARD enters with a large vial and several overly large kernels of corn.

DR. HOWARD

Here it is, doctor!

SYNTHIA

Please, let this be it!

SYNTHIA dips the kernels in the vial, then plants a large corn seed among the normal sprouts. The new kernel starts to grow immediately.

SYNTHIA (cont'd)

Fast growing... Now for the BOBCO 2000.

SYNTHIA picks up a spray bottle with "BOBCO" printed on the side. She sprays the seedlings. which shake, then flops over, dead. ISAAC is beside himself with disappointment.

SYNTHIA (cont'd)

Still not herbicide resistant. So close... what am I missing?

SYNTHIA picks up the last vial.

DR. HOWARD

This is the last batch.

SYNTHIA

After this it's back to the drawing board. I can hear Freddy now... "I told you, you cannot change nature..."

DR. ESPERANZA'S VOICE

(heard only by SYNTHIA)

You cannot change nature... what you are doing is dangerous... what horrors you may release... (PAUSE) What horrors...

SYNTHIA

(to ESPERANZA)

I heard you the first time! What should I do... stop my research? Our SuperCorn will feed half the planet.

DR. ESPERANZA'S VOICE

Will not!

SYNTHIA

Will, too! Freddie, I'm sorry, but sometimes science is the answer!

SYNTHIA plants another seed. it starts to grow. She sprays it. it starts to die.

Amos Glick as DR. FINE, Velina Brown as SYNTHIA, Victor Toman as DR. HOWARD
Photo by David Allen

SYNTHIA(cont'd)
Come on, live, damnit, live!

The Supercorn recovers, and grows to impressive height

SYNTHIA(cont'd)
Its alive! Alive! Fast growing, vitamin enriched, and herbicide resistant -

BOTH
SuperCorn!

ISAAC
It's... It's magnificent!

SYNTHIA
No more hunger, Isaac, no more starvation...

DR. HOWARD
I'll call the Press! The U.N.! The Nobel Prize committee!

DR. HOWARD exits.

ISAAC
Synthia, you've done it!

Behind them the SUPERCORN plant has begun to sway ominously. It is very alive. SYNTHIA notices.

SYNTHIA
Oh, my goodness!

With a grunt SUPERCORN violently uproots and devours the smaller plants around it. It continues to grow, and other suddenly SUPERCORN plants pop up around it.

SYNTHIA
Oh no, its... an exterminator plant! It will kill all the crops in the surrounding fields, replacing them with more SuperCorn!

ISAAC
Do you know what this means?

SYNTHIA
It would spread from farm to farm, like a virus...

ISAAC
Everyone in the area would be growing SuperCorn...

SYNTHIA
...even if they didn't want to!

ISAAC
It's... perfect!

SYNTHIA
What?

ISAAC

We own SuperCorn, Synthia! Any farmer growing it, even by accident, has to pay for it!

SYNTHIA

It means we've failed! It would drive poor farmers deeper into debt! This wouldn't end hunger, it would mean devastation! We've got to destroy it!

SYNTHIA picks up vial containing formula and prepares to smash it. ISAAC stops her, grabs the vial from her.

ISAAC

Are you outta your mind?

SYNTHIA

This wouldn't end hunger, it could kill millions!

ISAAC

Millions die everyday, Synthia. Somebody's going to get rich from it - why not us?

SYNTHIA

You're crazy!

ISAAC

We'll see how crazy I am when I introduce this at the World Food Conference!

SYNTHIA

No!

ISAAC

Yes! You said it - everyone will want fast growing, vitamin enriched SuperCorn, Synthia. And when a million farmers are paying us royalties, you'll thank me.

ISAAC exits with SuperCorn vial.

SYNTHIA

No Isaac, come back!

DR. ESPERANZA'S VOICE

What horrors you may release...

SYNTHIA

Shut up! I've got to stop this... I've got to stop SuperCorn! First I have to destroy my research!

SYNTHIA trashes her lab, throwing all her work into an incinerator. SYNTIA then turns to the SUPERCORN plant, which seems to sense the threat. SYNTHIA begins to rip out the smaller SUPERCORN plants, throwing them in in incinerator, while the plant, and with a shout SYNTHIA attacks. They fight back furiously, but in the end she strangles the plant and forces it

screaming into the incinerator. After a moment some popcorn comes out.

SYNTHIA(cont'd)
Now I've got to get that vial back!

SYNTHIA exits.

SCENE 6

OUTSIDE OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

TWO SECURITY GUARDS cross the stage making sure the area is secure and exit. CARL and STICK sneakily enter and hang a banner "WORLD GREED CONFERENCE" across stage. OLD ALBRIGHT follows slowly, still dazed, and still holding his protest sign. STICK addresses the audience as if they were the crowd at a direct action protest.

STICK

Okay! We have shut down this intersection! Other groups are occupying streets all around the Food Conference Building. We have totally surrounded the Conference!

CARL

We will keep the delegates out and shut this conference down tighter than Seattle! My name is Carl, Stick and this I our friend Old Dude.

They indicate OLD ALBRIGHT.

STICK AND CARL

And we are... The Redwood Winter Collective!

STICK

A lot of you missed our Nonviolent Workshop last night, so before the cops get here we better try some moves.

The following section is directed to the audience, and is a "stretch." Since this is a long one act, this is a chance for the audience to both be involved and move a bit.

CARL

Everybody stand up. First thing you have to learn is the Civil Rights Duck. Protect your head with your arm, and lean to the right! Okay, now the left, again remember - the head you save may be your own!

STICK

Next everyone link arms. Come on! How are we going to save the world together if we can't even do this? Now right foot forward, stomp and back. Other foot, stomp and back. I tell you if we had this move in front of NikeTown nobody would get in that store!

CARL

Okay, now the police are going to be here soon, and what do we do when they try to move us? If its a peace officer you say -

STICK

No sir, I will not move. (CROWD REPEATS)

CARL

And if it's a cop, say -

STICK

I know my rights! (CROWD REPEATS)

CARL

And if it's a pig, say -CARL & STICK
Up yours, pig! (CROWD REPEATS)

CARL

Now the most important part of a sit down demonstration - Sit down!

Crowd sits.

OLD ALBRIGHT

(as if coming out of a dream)

I had a dream last night...

STICK

You got something to say Old Dude?

CARL

Shhhh! He's like some old slam poet! Go ahead, dude.

OLD ALBRIGHT

(addressing the crowd)

I think it was a dream... A barren wasteland. Dark acid clouds rained thick poison on the seared flesh of Mother Earth. Mutant genes destroyed plants, and twisted animals, while millions of sick, starving people wandered the planet, praying for death. Humans finally controlled the essence of life, and that knowledge was killing them. And there was no more corn.

CARL and STICK are blown away.

CARL & STICK

Whoa...

CARL

Told ya he was good!

SECURITY GUARDS enter.

SECURITY GUARD 1

This is an illegal assembly! Leave now or you will be arrested!

CARL & STICK

This is a peaceful protest!

SECURITY GUARD 2

I don't care if it's a birthday party - get off the street, commies!

SECURITY GUARDS attack CARL, STICK, and OLD ALBRIGHT. OLD ALBRIGHT gets hit on the head by one of the SECURITY GUARDS again as SECURITY GUARDS take down the banner and chase CARL and STICK offstage, leaving OLD ALBRIGHT, who is reeling from his latest head blow. Then -

OLD ALBRIGHT

I...I...I remember! I know where I am - (Looks at protest sign, which reads "STOP THE CORPORATE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE") and I know what I have to do! Synthia, the formula, the conference building, (and, mysteriously) the key to the broom closet...

OLD ALBRIGHT exits.

Michael Gene Sullivan as ISSAAC, Ed Holmes as BOB MURTAUGH.....Photo by David

SCENE 7

THE LECTURE HALL INSIDE THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE.

An alarm is sounding,

COP 1 V.O.
Alert! Alert! Security to area 5! Protesters have entered the building! Security to area 5! Protesters have entered the building!

SECURITY GUARD 1 and SECURITY GUARD 2 enter from opposite directions. Both very shaky, and they do not see each other.. Suddenly SECURITY GUARD 1 sees SECURITY GUARD 2, points his gun.

SECURITY GUARD 1
Freeze!

SECURITY GUARD 2
Damn, gun down!

SECURITY GUARD 1
Sorry. (on walkie talkie) Yeah, we're checking out the lecture hall now, over! (to SECURITY GUARD 2) These punks are all over the place!

SECURITY GUARD 2
I know! Two guys got on the roof with a banner that said "World Greed Conference!"

SECURITY GUARD 2 seems to be taking this way too emotionally, and begins to break down

SECURITY GUARD 1
(comforting)
Hey, we can handle this!

SECURITY GUARD 2
And that giant Mumia puppet out front? I swear that puppet looked at me! Then it waved, like it was sayin' "Hey, Tony, remember the anti-apartheid rallies, when you were on our side? Remember "Free Nicaragua?" Now I gotta worry about what they're doing to our food"

SECURITY GUARD 1
(trying to talk him down)
Don't you do this, Tony! Don't you go "green" on me!

SECURITY GUARD 2
(singing)
"Fight the Power, you got to fight the powers that be..."

SECURITY GUARD 1
Get a hold of yourself!

SECURITY GUARD 1 slaps SECURITY GUARD 2

SECURITY GUARD 2

I'm scared! Scared I'm on the wrong side!

SECURITY GUARD 1

We're all scared, Tony. But we got a job to do. Security. And right now we need you... I need you.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Hold me!

The two SECURITY GUARDS embrace as ISAAC and BOB enter. ISAAC is holding the vial of SuperCorn formula.

BOB

Next time we'll have the Conference in Indonesia; then we can shoot the protesters! (sees GUARDS) What the... get back to work! (GUARDS exit) Domestic partners. What's that sound?

ISAAC and BOB cross and mime opening a window downstage to see the crowd.

CROWD

(chanting)

Albright's all wrong! Albright's all wrong!

ISAAC

(looking at audience)

Sure are a lot of protesters...

BOB

Just some malcontents; punks against progress! (closes window) Hey - freedom of speech is why we invented tear gas. All you need to worry about is - next winter in Costa Rica or the South of France?

ISAAC

Bob suppose, just suppose something went wrong? Suppose Synthia is right? We get sued!

BOB

Relax. Lemme tell you how Bio business works...

Song: "THE 5 BIG 'D'S'"

BOB

DON'T WORRY, CHILL OUT, PUT YOUR MIND AT

EASE,

SUCCESS IS ASSURED BY THE 5 BIG D'S.

DENY, DELAY, DUPE, DUMP AND DIVIDE,

A FORMULA MORE POTENT AS MY HERBICIDE!

DENY, DELAY, DUMP, DUPE AND DIVIDE,

LET ME TAKE YOU ON THE 5 D RIDE!

LET'S SAY WE'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR CAUSING HARM,

LET'S SAY SOMEONE RAISES A BIG ALARM,

JUST SAY IT'S NOT TRUE, JUST SAY IT'S A LIE, IT

WORKS LIKE A CHARM TO JUST DENY IT!

ISAAC

WORKS LIKE A CHARM TO JUST DENY IT?

BOB

IF THE GOVERNMENT SAYS "YOU GOTTA FIND A

SOLUTION,

OR PAY FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION",

IF YOU GET STUCK WITH A FINE, JUST DON'T PAY IT,

IF THEY THREATEN LEGISLATION, JUST DELAY IT!

ISAAC

(catching on)

IF THEY THREATEN LEGISLATION, JUST DELAY IT!

BOB

IF DIFFERENT GROUPS UNITE AND GET UP IN ARMS,

TREE HUGGERS IN THE TREES AND

FARMERS ON THE FARMS,

THERE'S A VERY SIMPLE PROPOSITION,

ALL YOU GOT TO DO IS DIVIDE THE OPPOSITION!

ISAAC

ALL YOU GOT TO DO IS DIVIDE THE OPPOSITION!

BOB

IF RUN INTO A PROBLEM WE GO ON THE ATTACK!
GET OURSELF A PR FLACK.
BUY SOME TV TIME AND PIPE IN THE POOP,
THE WHOLE DAMN COUNTRY CAN BE DUPED!

ISAAC

THE WHOLE DAMN COUNTRY CAN BE DUPED!

ISAAC and BOB dance around stage.

BOB

NOW IF WORSE COMES TO WORSE AND IT ALL GOES TO HELL!
AND NO ONE'S BUYING WHAT YOU GOT TO SELL!
A PROBLEM OVER HERE, JUST GO OVER THERE,
DUMP IT IN THE THIRD WORLD, OVER THERE WHO CARES?

ISAAC

DUMP IT IN THE THIRD WORLD, OVER THERE WHO CARES?

BOTH

DENY, DELAY, DUPE, DUMP AND DIVIDE!
DENY, DELAY, DUPE, DUMP AND DIVIDE!
DENY, DELAY, DUPE, DUMP AND DIVIDE!

Velina Brown as SYNTHIA, Michael Gene Sullivan as ISSAAC,
Ed Holmes as BOB MURTAUGH Photo by David Allen

SECURITY GUARD 1 enters.

SECURITY GUARD 1

Mr... Murtaugh, we caught one of the protesters, trying to get into the lecture hall!

SECURITY GUARD 2 brings SYNTHIA in.

BOB

Dr. Bloom?

ISAAC

Synthia!?

SYNTHIA

Isaac!

SECURITY GUARD 1

Aww, Christ! Don't tell me she <u>is</u> a scientist!

SECURITY GUARD 2

(distraught)

See? We can't tell the good guys from the bad!

COP 1 V.O.

Alert! An intruder has been spotted in area 5! Alert!

SECURITY GUARD 1

Let's go!

SECURITY GUARD 1 and SECURITY GUARD 2 exit.

SYNTHIA

Isaac, I have to talk to you...

BOB

I'll leave you two genius' alone. Isaac, I can't keep the delegates out any longer.

BOB exits.

ISAAC

You can't stop me, Synthia. SuperCorn is as much mine as it is yours!

SYNTHIA

I know.

ISAAC

We'll make billions with this...

SYNTHIA

You're right, Isaac.

ISAAC

And nothing is going to stand between me and... what?

SYNTHIA

You're right.

ISAAC

I am?

SYNTHIA

After you left I did some thinking...,

ISAAC

You did?

SYNTHIA assumes a very seductive manner toward ISSAC.

SYNTHIA

Why shouldn't we get rich from our invention? We've worked hard ñ we deserve it...

ISAAC is getting aroused, and begins to move to SYNTHIA, but, suspicious, thinks better of it

ISAAC

What about the starving millions?

SYNTHIA

Millions of people starve everyday, Isaac. Someone is going to profit from it. Why not us?

SYNTHIA entwines herself around ISAAC, slowly snaking her hand toward the vial of SuperCorn formula in ISAAC'S hand.

SYNTHIA(cont'd)

All the little farmers paying us all that money. And all we have to do is reach out and... grab it!

SYNTHIA grabs the vial.

ISAAC

What are you doing?

SYNTHIA

This is poison, Isaac! I'll never let you sell it!

SYNTHIA exits.

ISAAC

Synthia! Come back here!

ISAAC runs after her. SYNTHIA re-enters from another direction, looking for a place to hide. we hear ISAAC calling after her.

ISAAC (cont'd)

Synthia! Were are you going? Synthia!

SYNTHIA exits. ISAAC enters, looks around, exits. SECURITY GUARD 1 enters on walkie talkie.

SECURITY GUARD 1

Big Bush, come in. Big Bush, come in... this is Little Shrub! We got most of the intruders outta the building... Give us a few minutes to clear the rest out, then you can start the conference.

SECURITY GUARD 2 Enters, running.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Did he come this way?

SECURITY GUARD 1

Who?

Behind them OLD ALBRIGHT enters, sneaking across the stage.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Some old guy... big gray Afro... looks like an old hippie...

OLD ALBRIGHT:

(Overhears them, is offended)

I'm not an old hippie! Oops!

GUARDS see him, and OLD ALBRIGHT is chased off. SYNTHIA enters from another direction, vial in her hand.

SYNTHIA

I've got to dispose of this properly! Some place safe...

ISAAC

(offstage)

Synthia!

SYNTHIA hears ISAAC and exits quickly. ISAAC enters.

ISAAC (cont'd)

Synthia!!

ISAAC exits, SYNTHIA enters, looking for somewhere to dump vial.

SYNTHIA

Every drain leads directly into the bay!

SYNTHIA exits. ISAAC enters.

ISAAC

Synthia!

ISAAC exits. SYNTHIA enters looks around, exits. SECURITY GUARDS run across. ISAAC enters.

ISAAC (cont'd)
Remember? *(SINGING)* "This is our dream!"

ISAAC exits. SYNTHIA enters, closes and locks door behind her.

SYNTHIA
Guards everywhere... eventually they'll catch me in here, and give Isaac the formula!

ISAAC
(offstage)
Synthia!

SYNTHIA
How could I have created something so dangerous?

ISAAC
(offstage)
Synthia! (Beats on door) I know you're in there!

SYNTHIA
I was so blinded by discovery that I created a monster!

ISAAC
(offstage)
Synthia! (Beats on door) I'm going to get the key!

SYNTHIA
I've got to destroy it!

Desperate to destroy the formula before ISAAC returns, and with nowhere in the closet to dispose of it, SYNTHIA decides she only has one option - she drinks it.

SYNTHIA(cont'd)
That was the last batch... he'll never be able to replicate it!

SYNTHIA begins to cough as the poison works through her body.

SYNTHIA(cont'd)
I've stopped him from selling SuperCorn to the world. (cough, cough) I've stopped you, Isaac...

Voice
(offstage)
Synthia! I've got the key!

SYNTHIA dies. after a moment the door opens, and OLD ALBRIGHT enters. He sees SYNTHIA and rushes to her side.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Synthia! Synthia, wake up! It's me. Isaac! Synthia?

OLD ALBRIGHT realizes that SYNTHIA is dead.

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)
(crying and distraught)
Oh no, I'm too late! I didn't change anything! I'm just a stupid, slow old man. (to SYNTHIA) You wanted to feed the World, and all I did was get rich, destroy the planet, move into a dome, and invent a time machine...

Defeated, OLD ALBRIGHT exits. Pause. Suddenly OLD ALBRIGHT pops back on.

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)
Time machine! I have a time machine! (Pulling time machine helmet out, he puts it on) This really is my last chance! Lets see - I only have enough power left for one... short... trip!

OLD ALBRIGHT activates time machine, and everything moves in reverse. SYNTHIA gets up, moves and speaks backwards, spits formula back into vial, then...

SYNTHIA
How could I have created something so dangerous? I was so blinded by discovery that I created a monster! I've got to destroy it!

SYNTHIA begins to drink.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Synthia!

SYNTHIA

(startled)
Who are you? How did you get in here?

OLD ALBRIGHT
Its a long story. Listen, we don't have much time. Every fear you have about that formula is right!

SYNTHIA
But how do you ...

OLD ALBRIGHT
It will spread from field to field, and farmers will be impoverished paying you royalties.

SYNTHIA
I knew it!

OLD ALBRIGHT

Then SuperCorn will cross pollinate with weeds! Stronger and stronger herbicides will be sprayed, poisoning whole countries until nothing grows. Millions will starve!

SYNTHIA

Oh no!

OLD ALBRIGHT

Eventually only he rich will have food, but they will live in protected domes, while outside is poverty, hunger and death. But I can stop it all now, if you give me the vial.

SYNTHIA begins to believe this crazy old men, but pulls back before she hands him the vial.

SYNTHIA

Who are you?

OLD ALBRIGHT

Just an old scientist, trying to do right. Trust me, Dr. Bloom.

SYNTHIA hands OLD ALBRIGHT the vial.

OLD ALBRIGHT

I'll take care of this. Thank you... Synthia.

OLD ALBRIGHT exits.

SYNTHIA

Wait! How do you know about the future? (He's gone) The way he said my name... It was almost like... could it be...

SYNTHIA begins to follow OLD ALBRIGHT, but is cut off as ISAAC enters.

ISAAC

(menacingly)

Synthia!

SYNTHIA

Stand back, Isaac!

SYNTHIA holds her hand away from ISAAC forgetting that she no longer has the vial.

ISAAC

Don't be stupid! Give me the vial!

SYNTHIA

(looking at her hand)

Its... gone! And that was the last batch! I've stopped you from selling SuperCorn to the world!

ISAAC
We could have had it all, Synthia. But you just want to throw it all away. Well I will find that formula, because this is my dream You can't stop me! No no can stop me!

Suddenly the hand of OLD ALBRIGHT reaches out from behind a wall, grabbing ISAAC, and forcing him to drink the vial of SuperCorn formula. (This is, of course, very tricky since they are played by the same actor. Have fun figuring that out.)

ISAAC (cont'd)
No! The Formula! Why you old... gak! I'll tear you a new... gak! I... gak! Synthia!

ISAAC, dying, stumbles off stage. SYNTHIA crosses, and sees him die. From another direction OLD ALBRIGHT enters, dying.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Synthia!

SYNTHIA
(confused)
Isaac?

OLD ALBRIGHT falls to the ground. SYNTHIA goes to him. For a brief moment they look into each others eyes.

OLD ALBRIGHT
Synthia...

Painfully pulling himself up OLD ALBRIGHT reaches into his robe and pulls out his digital tablet.

Read this.

OLD ALBRIGHT hands SYNTHIA the tablet, pulls himself away from her.

OLD ALBRIGHT (cont'd)
And when you have a daughter, name her... Chloe. Goodbye... Synthia!

In a flash OLD ALBRIGHT disappears. SYNTHIA,, stunned, stumbles to where OLD ALBRIGHT was, but he is gone. BOB and SECURITY GUARD 2 enter.

BOB
Let the delegates in.

SECURITY *GUARD* 2 salutes, exits.
Synthia, have you seen Isaac?

SYNTHIA
(confused, covering)
Actually, yes, but he's... not feeling well... he's sick... he's... got the flu!

BOB
Where is he?

SYNTHIA
Oh, he's laying down... somewhere. But he said I should deliver the speech introducing SuperCorn.

BOB
He did?

SYNTHIA
Yes, he did.

BOB
That would be great!

SECURITY GUARD 2 enters.

SECURITY GUARD 2
Mr. Murtaugh, the President is here.

BOB
(To SECURITY GUARD 2) Get the podium ready.

SECURITY GUARD 2 sets up podium, as BOB prepares for his speech. when he's ready BOB steps up to speak.

BOB (cont'd)
Welcome to the World Food Conference! It is a great personal honor to introduce our honorary Chairman, President Jay Witherspoon II!

WITHERSPOON enters, to recorded applause, steps up to podium.

WITHERSPOON
Thank you, Bob. I am proud to be a friend of the Neo-Natural industry. In fact we are trying to decide if I should be known as the Food President or as the Neo-Natural! (recorded applause) I am here to thank you all for your help in my election and for coming to the aid of little Bapa and all the little Bapa's around the world! Keep up the good work! Thank you!

BOB steps back up to the podium.

BOB
We were going to hear from Dr. Isaac Albright, but he's... indisposed. But I'm happy to say that he will be replaced by his wife, the creator of SuperCorn, the shining star in the BOBCO firmament, the girl genius herself, Dr. Synthia Bloom!

BOB steps aside, and leads the applause as SYNTHIA steps up to the podium. WITHERSPOON and BOB LOOK on happily. SECURITY GUARD 2 is standing off to the side. SYNTHIA begins to speak - she is doing her best to hold herself together.

SYNTHIA

Thank you. It would be hard for me to describe the wonderful small world inside my microscope. It's an adventure, going places no one's been before, seeing things never seen before. And all of it adding to what we need to know. When I look to long at my small world, I forget that it's part of a larger reality. Sometimes it's easy to forget the cautionary principle: do no harm. Just because we can do something is not to say we should.

Song: "RULE OF THE BOTTOM LINE"

SYNTHIA (cont'd)

I THINK WE ALL MUST BE FROM MARS,

OR FROM SOME PLANET CIRCLING A DISTANT STAR.

THAT'S WHY WE CAN TAKE THE RISKS WE TAKE,

AND WHY WE CAN MAKE

THE CHOICES THAT WE MAKE.

WE'RE JUST VISITING, NOT STAYING AROUND,

SO WE CAN POISON THE WATER, THE AIR AND

GROUND.

AFTER ALL WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

WE KNOW WE'LL BE RETURNING TO OUR HOME

OUT THERE.

THE FUTURE IS COMING,

SO PREPARE TO START RUNNING,

BACK TO OUR HOME OUT THERE!

DISASTER IS LOOMING,

PREPARE TO START ZOOMING,

BACK TO OUR HOME OUT THERE!

BUT THIS IS NOT A SCIENCE FICTION FANTASY!

AND THERE'S NOT A CHANCE THAT WE CAN FLEE,

FROM OUR EVER GROWING LEGACY,

OF ACID RAIN AND SHORT TERM GAIN,

AND A WORLD CONSIGNED,

TO THE RULE OF THE BOTTOM LINE!

WITHERSPOON and BOB LOOK confused.

SYNTHIA
Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm canceling SuperCorn!

BOB
(stunned)
What?

SYNTHIA
Albright Laboratories is severing it"s connection with BOBCO.

WITHERSPOON is embarrassed and angry.

PRES JAY
Bob, you better take care of this!

WITHERSPOON exits. BOB turns to SECURITY GUARD 2, who has been squirming in ethical conflict.

BOB
Stop her!

BOB pushes SECURITY GUARD 2 toward SYNTHIA. SECURITY GUARD 2 crosses to SYNTHIA at the podium, but is clearly having an inner struggle. Finally stops himself, and raises a defiant fist.

SECURITY GUARD 2
(enthusiastically)
FREE MUMIA!

BOB
What?

BOB tries to stop SYNTHIA himself,, but is fended off by SECURITY GUARD 2.

BOB (cont'd)
(to COP 2)
You're fired! Jay! Come back!

BOB exits.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Fight the power, doc!

SECURITY GUARD 2 chases after BOB.

SYNTHIA
(to audience)

WE'RE MOVING AT A FRIGHTENING SPEED,

GOING WHERE WE THINK WE NEED TO BE,

WE'RE SMART, BUT WE'RE NOT WISE,

IT'S TIME WE OPENED UP OUR EYES,

AND HOPE WE DON'T SUCCEED!

IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE,

WE CAN PUT ON THE BRAKES,

AND THINK BEFORE WE PROCEED!

The rest of the cast enters, and sing directly to the audience.

ALL

'CAUSE THERE'S NOT A CHANCE THAT WE CAN FLEE,

FROM OUR EVER GROWING LEGACY,

OF ACID RAIN AND SHORT TERM GAIN,

AND A WORLD CONSIGNED,

TO THE RULE OF THE BOTTOM LINE!

End of Play

1600 Transylvania Avenue

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan

Lyrics by Bruce Barthol, Music by Jason Sherbundy

Poster by Spain Rodriguez

At the beginning of the new millennium corporations in the United States reigned supreme. With the revolving door between the Boardrooms and the halls of Congress spinning at full speed, with both major political Parties agreeing to deregulation, the Corporatocracy was in full flower. Not since the age of the Robber Barons had corporations welded such unquestioned might, with all the rights and privileges of any citizen of the United States. For corporations money is a form of Free Speech. So limiting their use of that money to influence politicians would be as unconstitutional as putting a gag on a protestor. After all - Corporations are Legal people…

Wait, what? What does that mean? How the Hell did that happen?

"it was 1886, a little know land use case here, in California…" is how professor Van Helsing begins his explanation of the birth of the Corporate Person. In the style of a gothic horror film "1600…" is a classic story of vampires sucking the blood from their victims, draining them dry so that the vampire may live. And by vampire we mean corporations. And by blood we mean the common wealth created by the hard work of the the people. And by victims we mean all of us.

"…The inexhaustible purveyors of agitprop musical comedy have responded with their sharpest, funniest and most exhilarating show in years."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"I remember my first Mime Troupe show like it was yesterday. It was in Dolores Park, in the heart of San Francisco, almost forty years ago. The crowd was huge and teeming with life. Hippies and blue collar workers, anti-war freaks and young professionals lounged together on an endless sea of blankets laden with food and wine and weed. Balloons floated above us as the band prepped us with some kick-ass blues tunes. When the Mime Troupe hit the stage, we were ready. Ready to laugh, to jeer, to shout… to celebrate our collective will. It was power to the people time!

The actors were nothing less than fierce. They deftly sashayed through a litany of scenes decrying injustice: corporate greed, insidious racism, political ignorance… a relentless attack on the forces that define exploitation. And it was laced with satire so strong it threatened to bust our guts combined with a deep and abiding love for regular, working people. We left Dolores Park feeling uplifted, united, with the promise of taking action in the hope that our lives could be better.

How remarkable that after all these years, the Mime Troupe is still at it. The company has somehow endured, weathering massive cutbacks in the arts and the steady rise of the Right. This latest collection of plays stands as a testament to both the durability of the individuals who make up the collective and the continuing appeal of progressive values. Now, more than ever, we need to be creatively inspired and encouraged to take political action. May the Troupe continue to sustain us!"
TONY TACCONE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

White House Aide
Reporters -
    Johnson
    Fredericks
    O'Reilly
Renfield
The Vice President
The President
Shamina
Lucy
Jim Slackjaw
Van Helsing
Intern
Hospital Administrator
Lead Celebrant
Celebrants
Secret Service Agent

1600 TRANSYLVANIA AVENUE opened July 4th, 2012 in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan, with the following cast:

White House Aide, Lucy, Celebrant.....Anastasia Coon
Johnson, Shamina Jones, Celebrant.....Velina Brown*
Fredericks, Jim Slackjaw, custodian,
Celebrant, Secret Service Agent.....Michael Carreiro
O'Reilly, Van Helsing, Celebrant.....Victor Toman*
Renfield.....Conrad Cimarra*
The President, intern, Celebrant.....Amos Glick*
The Vice President, Hospital Administrator,
Lead Celebrant.....Ed Holmes*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

THE PRESS ROOM IN THE WHITE HOUSE

In the dark, dank bowels of 1600 Transylvania Avenue. Horror film overture as a loud creaky door opens, and an Igor-esque hunchbacked AIDE enters. She drags herself around the ornate room, frantically polishes a podium which bears the Presidential seal, until she hears a loud knocking. She quickly finishes her cleaning, and creeps over to the door, straightens herself up, transforming herself into a smooth and elegant Presidential AIDE. She opens the door and escorts three reporters, JOHNSON, FREDERICKS and GENE RENFIELD in. JOHNSON and FREDERICKS are veteran members of the press pool and clearly know each other. RENFIELD, a perky mid-thirties, appears more serious, enthusiastic, and separate from the other reporters.

AIDE
Right this way... The press conference will begin as soon as the President arrives.

JOHNSON
Thank you.

The AIDE goes to the exit. Just before leaving she reverts to her curled, snarling self. A loud creak and slam as the AIDE exits.

JOHNSON
Okay, cough it up, Fredericks. Twenty bucks.

FREDERICKS
(pulls out money)
Okay, okay! Here. Man, I thought for sure The Vice President would have dropped dead by now. This pool is going to wipe me out.

JOHNSON
Twenty bucks is nothing. Rodriguez lost two hundred when that Republican senator jumped parties and the Vice President didn't even blink.

FREDERICKS
Never thought I'd live to see the day- two CEO's in the White House. People used to elect lawyers to make laws, now they elect businessmen to break them.

JOHNSON
Better watch your mouth, Fredericks. Talk like that will get you barred from the press conferences... or worse. Remember Sullivan, from the Post?

FREDERICKS
And what happened to Brown, from the Sentinel?

JOHNSON
And where is Rodriguez?

Another reporter, O'REILLY, enters.

O'REILLY
He's gone!

JOHNSON
Who?

O'REILLY
Rodriguez! Guy at the desk said his press pass was cancelled, and no one has seen him since... since...

JOHNSON
(ominously)
That last presidential press conference!

Eerie music begins, as the REPORTERS cringe.

JOHNSON
First that question about the President's top adviser being a consultant for the country's biggest energy supplier...

O'REILLY
I warned him! Stay away from energy! I tried to warn him!

JOHNSON
...then a follow-up on the Vice President's connection to Enron Corporation.

FREDERICKS
...that's when they stopped the press conference and took Rodriguez to see...

A wolf bays in the distance. All the REPORTERS flinch in fear except RENFIELD, who is innocently taking the room in.

JOHNSON
Hush! We must not speak of such things!

RENFIELD
Why not?

REPORTERS gasp, and look at RENFIELD horrified.

JOHNSON
Who... who are you?

RENFIELD
Gene Renfield, Coast City Courier. I'm replacing Rodriguez.

O'REILLY
Where is he?

RENFIELD

Nobody knows... He just disappeared. (eerie music sting) But I'm ready... and I've got some tough questions for the President: Why does 40% of his tax cut go to the top 1%? (REPORTERS gasp) Why sign a bankruptcy law that benefits credit card companies at the expense of consumers? (gasp!) And why can't he speak like a normal person?

The REPORTERS cringe. O'REILLY faints.

JOHNSON

(ominously)

Take care, Mr. Renfield! You are new to the White House Press corp, and do not know our ways. There are things here you do not understand... questions you must not ask...

RENFIELD

Yeah, but -

REPORTERS

Shhhh!

Song: "PRESS CONFERENCE"

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

WE DON'T USE BIG WORDS

OR FUNNY FOREIGN NAMES

OR FOLLOW UP ON QUESTIONS

THAT SHOOT HIM DOWN IN FLAMES.

WE NEVER EVER NOTICE

WHEN WHAT HE SAYS IS WRONG.

IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR JOB,

JUST WATCH AND GO ALONG.

IF WE WANT TO KEEP OUR JOBS,

RENFIELD

Listen -

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

SHUT UP! AND GO ALONG.

RENFIELD

It's the job of reporters to ask tough questions.

O'REILLY
(pointing at RENFIELD, in abject terror)
He will destroy us all!

The AIDE re-enters.

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

SHUT UP! AND GO ALONG.

AIDE
Ladies and gentleman -

RENFIELD
What are you so afraid of?

AIDE
- the President of the United States.

A minor key fanfare of "Hail to the Chief" as the PRESIDENT enters. The PRESIDENT is mid-fifties, with an easy smile, a slight country accent, an awkward physicality, and an a loose grasp on the importance of his job, and syntax. The PRESIDENT steps behind the podium.

PRESIDENT
I'd like to thank you all for coming. First let me just say that I've had a lot of articles from your newspapers read to me recently that say this President doesn't care. Not true. The last President may have felt the nation's pain but this administration promises to be responsible for it. Please feel free to ask me any of your little questions.

The REPORTERS jockey for position.

FREDRICKS

MISTER PRES–I————

O'REILLY

MISTER PRES–I————

RENFIELD

MISTER PRES–I————

JOHNSON

MISTER PRES–I————

JOHNSON, RENFIELD, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

MISTER PRESIDENT!

The PRESIDENT picks JOHNSON to ask the first question.

JOHNSON

JOHNSON, FROM THE BUGLE!

I have a question to ask Mr. President,

and I pray you will not find me impertinent!

THERE'S A CONTROVERSY THAT'S GROWING HOT

AND HOTTER

ABOUT LEVELS OF ARSENIC IN OUR DRINKING WATER -

PRESIDENT

WE'RE ACTIV'LY STUDYIN' ALL KINDS OF

POLLUTION,

BUT LET'S NOT RUN TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR

EV'RY SOLUTION.

WE SEE THIS NOT AS A PROBLEM, BUT AN

OPPORTUNITY

TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THE CORP'RATE

COMMUNITY!

REPORTERS obediently write down PRESIDENT's words.

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THE CORP'RATE COMMUNITY,

THE CORP'RATE COMMUNITY!

PRESIDENT

I'M SURE SOME CORPORATION WILL PUT THINGS

BACK IN KILTER

BY COMIN' UP WITH SOME KIND OF

ARSENIC FILTER!

AND EV'RY FAM'LY IN THE COUNTRY,

AND THIS YOU CAN'T REBUTT,

WILL HAVE MONEY FOR THAT FILTER

'CAUSE OF MY BIG 'OL TAX CUT!

FREDRICKS

MISTER PRES–I————

O'REILLY

MISTER PRES–I————

RENFIELD

MISTER PRES–I————

JOHNSON

MISTER PRES–I————

JOHNSON, RENFIELD, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

...DENT!

The PRESIDENT recognizes O'REILLY for the next question.

O'REILLY

O'Reilly, from the Tribune!

IN TERMS OF PRIORITIZATION -

YOU'VE SAID YOUR ADMINISTRATION

THINKS THAT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

STANDS AT NUMBER ONE.

WILL FIFTEEN HUNDRED DOLLAR VOUCHERS

THAT YOU'LL GIVE THE LITTLE SLOUCHERS

IMPROVE THE EDUCATION

OF EV'RY DAUGHTER AND SON?

PRESIDENT

IT'S TIME TO END THE TYR'NNY OF OUR COUNTRY'S

PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

WHO TURN OUT ILLITERNITS, LOSERS AND FOOLS!

LET US GIVE TO THE PARENTS SOME POWER AND

SOME MONEY

TO CHOOSE A PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR THEIR LITTLE

SIS AND SONNY!

REPORTERS again obediently write down PRESIDENT's words.

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

THEY CAN CHOOSE A SCHOOL FOR LITTLE SIS AND

SONNY,

FOR LITTLE SIS AND SONNY!

PRESIDENT

NOW I KNOW FIFTEEN HUNDRED WON'T PAY THE

WHOLE NUT,

BUT THEY'LL HAVE PLENTY EXTRA MONEY WITH

MY BIG 'OL TAX CUT!

PRESIDENT steps out from behind podium to dance.

PRESIDENT

I WANT TO SING AND DANCE,

I JUST WANT TO STRUT,

EV'RY TIME I THINK ABOUT THAT

BIG 'OL TAX CUT!

Amos Glick as THE PRESIDENT,
with Michael Carreiro, Victor Toman, Conrad Cimarra, Velina Brown as REPORTERS
Photo by John Carnwath

After short dance PRESIDENT returns to behind podium

JOHNSON, RENFIELD, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

MISTER PRESIDENT!

PRESIDENT points at RENFIELD.

RENFIELD

Gene Renfield, Coast City Courier!

THERE'S A FEDERAL COMMISSION THAT HAS THE

STATED MISSION

TO CONTROL THE COST OF POWER FOR THE PUBLIC

GOOD.

WILL YOUR ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT THE

REGULATION

OF THE RISING COST OF POWER LIKE YOU KNOW

YOU COULD?

PRESIDENT

(shocked)

PRICE CAPS!

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

(warning to RENFIELD)

PRICE CAPS! WE DON'T GO THERE!

PRESIDENT

PEOPLE GOTTA PAY WHAT THE MARKET WILL BEAR.

WANT LOW POWER PRICES AND YOUR GAS TANK

FILLED?

WHAT WE GOTTA DO IS MINE AND DRILL.

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS

WHAT WE GOTTA DO IS MINE AND DRILL.

WHAT WE GOTTA DO IS MINE AND DRILL.

PRESIDENT

NOW YOU KNOW CALIFORNYA IS ON MY MIND.

YOU KNOW THAT I'M COMPASSIONATE YOU KNOW

THAT I'M KIND

IF THEY'RE GONNA PAY THEIR BILLS,

THEY'RE GONNA NEED MORE BUCKS

BUT THAT'S WHAT THEY'LL GET WITH

MY BIG 'OL TAX CUT!

PRESIDENT steps out to dance again, and the REPORTERS - except RENFIELD - join him in a short hoedown.

PRESIDENT

I GOT TO SING AND DANCE,

I JUST GOT TO STRUT,

EV'RY TIME I THINK ABOUT THAT

MY BIG 'OL TAX CUT!

RENFIELD interrupts the good time being had.

RENFIELD

FOR MOST WORKING FAMILIES WHO WEAR BLUE

COLLARS

THAT TAX CUT AMOUNTS TO THREE HUNDRED

DOLLARS!

PRESIDENTS

I'm getting a lot more than that!

RENFIELD

DOES THE LACK OF REGULATION

OF THE ENERGY CORPORATIONS

REFLECT THE LARGE DONATIONS

THAT BOUGHT YOU YOUR WIN?

PRESIDENT
(suddenly concerned)

No comment -

RENFIELD

HOW ABOUT RENEWABLES LIKE SOLAR AND WIND?

PRESIDENT

Any other questions?

RENFIELD

AND HOW ABOUT AND ANSWER THAT'S NOT JUST SPIN?

JOHNSON, O'REILLY, FREDRICKS
(horrified)

AAAH!

JOHNSON & FREDRICKS
(confused)

HOW 'BOUT AN ANSWER THAT'S NOT JUST SPIN? (repeat)

O'REILLY
(confused)

SOLAR AND WIND? *(repeat)*

PRESIDENT

I, I, I, I... tax cut, tax cut, tax cut, tax cut! Who is this asshole?

JOHNSON & FREDRICKS

HOW 'BOUT AN - ANSWER THAT'S - NOT JUST SPIN?

O'REILLY

- SOLAR AND WIND? - SOLAR AND WIND?

PRESIDENT

TAX CUTS!

Thunder. Somewhere a huge bell begins to toll five times and the unassuming, humble VICE PRESIDENT enters. VICE PRESIDENT is an older, balding, slightly heavy-set man.

VICE PRESIDENT

Ladies and gentlemen this press conference is over. It is five o'clock, and the sun is going down.

The PRESIDENT leaves, as The reporters all look fearfully at the sinking sun. The REPORTERS scramble to leave before dark. RENFIELD joins them to go, but is stopped by the VICE PRESIDENT.

VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. Renfield...

The REPORTERS all stop at the door. Eerie music begins.

VICE PRESIDENT

Your questions for the President were very incisive, Mr. Renfield... very well informed. And so much passion about new companies and new technology.

RENFIELD

Thank you, Mr. Vice President. It's all for my readers.

VICE PRESIDENT

Have you ever thought how much more you could do for them... if you worked here?

RENFIELD

In the White House?

O'REILLY

(*warningly*)

No! No!

REPORTERS all gasp in horror, and throw warning looks to RENFIELD. O'REILLY faints again. An icy stare from the VICE PRESIDENT sends them slinking out of the room.

VICE PRESIDENT

The President has a special project coming up, and he needs just the right man for the job.

RENFIELD

I don't know, Mr. Vice President, I'm a newsman... I'm suppose to write about the news...

VICE PRESIDENT

This could be your chance to... make news...

RENFIELD

(enthralled))

A chance to make news...

VICE PRESIDENT

Perhaps a chance for a little power yourself? Wait here. I'll talk to the President.

Loud door creak and slam as VICE PRESIDENT exits. RENFIELD is alone.

RENFIELD
A special man for a special job. You hear that?

RENFIELD turns to other REPORTERS, but they are gone.

RENFIELD
Cowards! Afraid to ask tough questions! Not me. It's like my Dad used to say: Speak the truth and you've got nothing to be afraid of!

Unseen by RENFIELD a large BAT has fluttered onto the stage. It stays behind him wherever he goes.

RENFIELD
And it's not like I'm selling out. This is my chance to get on the inside and make a real difference! And get a little power. Wait'll the guys at the Courier hear about this! Maybe I was wrong about this Administration; The President's not such a bad guy.

The BAT suddenly attacks RENFIELD, latching onto his throat.

RENFIELD
(screaming)
Ahhhhhhhhhrrrrgggggg!

With the BAT at his throat RENFIELD is driven offstage, screaming. In the distance a wolf howls.

SCENE 2.

THE OFFICES OF GREEN GRRL INDUSTRIES

A large TV topped with an unusual device is in the middle of the office of Green Grrl Industries, a small high-tech start-up. SHAMINA JONES,, mid-thirties, enters on phone and carrying a banner which reads "Introducing StopCom." LUCY MORGAN, twenties - thirties, is following her. Both are carrying large boxes. They are clearly a team, and work very well together.

SHAMINA
(on phone)
That's right, Mr. Stoker, tomorrow right here at Green Grrl Labs, we are starting a revolution in the Television and energy industries -

LUCY holds the banner up near a wall.

LUCY
Do you like the banner there?

SHAMINA
(on phone)
- and if you are interested in investing in the StopCom...

SHAMINA hands LUCY phone, LUCY hands SHAMINA the banner.

LUCY
(on phone)
...then I'm sure you'll want to see our demonstration.

SHAMINA
Is this straight?

LUCY
(on phone)
We've already got investors lined up from Palo Alto to Menlo Park!

LUCY hands SHAMINA phone, goes to straighten banner.

SHAMINA
(on phone)
...and when the public hears about StopCom. everyone will want a piece of Green Grrl.

The TV powers on, with a beep. A TV ANCHORMAN appears on screen.

TV ANCHOR
This is Jim Slackjaw, Eyewitness News.

SHAMINA
(on phone)
Could you hold please? Thank you.

SHAMINA and LUCY stop working to watch the TV.

TV ANCHOR
We will be right back with- (inflated news theme) Powerless 2001! And the President's speech in Washington this morning, after this word from our sponsor-

Suddenly the TV powers down and a little voice says, "StopCom".

LUCY & SHAMINA
Yes!

LUCY
You fixed it!

SHAMINA
Yeah, it was just a glitch.

LUCY and SHAMINA give each other a special high-five they invented.

LUCY
(on phone)
So, we'll see you tomorrow? Two o'clock. Great! Bye! (hangs up) Variegated Ventures! Another 1.5 Million!

SHAMINA
Think we have enough food for the presentation?

LUCY
Safeway Hors d'oeuvres, CostCo falafel and Babe's Do It Yourself pigs-in a-blanket. We feed them, they start writing those fat checks, and then finally we can go into production!

SHAMINA
(sarcastically)
After we make a few of their "improvements".

LUCY
Corporate money, corporate arrogance but it's your invention. Your parents will be so proud.

SHAMINA
They'd be prouder if I hadn't sunk my doctoral tuition into all this.

LUCY
Buy them a house in Hillsboro, they'll forgive you.

SHAMINA and LUCY straighten the banner on the wall, as the TV powers up again.

TV ANNOUNCER
And now to the capital! In a stirring speech in the White House Rose Garden this morning the President answered critics of his energy policies with a surprise announcement.

PRESIDENT comes on screen.

PRESIDENT
Firstly, as you know I am a compassionate conservanator. To prove to the misguided people of California that I am not punishing you for your nearshortsightedness, my administration is making the far right decisions to bring the solution to your energy crisis to an end. Today I am announcing the formanization of B.I.T.E. - The Bureau of Innovative Technology and Energy.

LUCY & SHAMINA
Bite? (laugh)

PRESIDENT
And I am appointing as Bureau head your own enronemential... envenromvelvet... environmental watchdog, Mr. Gene Renfield.

RENFIELD appears in frame, shaking PRESIDENT's hand. He has a strange, frozen grin.

TV powers down and says, "StopCom".

SHAMINA
Gene Renfield? He covered the green beat for the Coast City Courier, wrote that piece exposing the toxic dump in the Valley. Why would someone like him work for them?

LUCY
Probably for the M-O-N-E-Y.

Suddenly RENFIELD enters the office. He is clearly not entirely himself. He is more craven, creepy, like a man possessed. He has a strange, strained smile, and his eyes...

RENFIELD
Green Grrl Industries?

LUCY and SHAMINA look at him, at the TV, then back at him. Wasn't he just on the...?.

SHAMINA
You're...?

RENFIELD
Renfield, Gene Renfield.

LUCY & SHAMINA
Bite?!

LUCY
I'm Lucy Morgan. How can I help you?

RENFIELD
News of your StopCom. has reached the capital.

LUCY
It has?

LUCY and SHAMINA surreptitiously give each other their special high five..

RENFIELD
The President has eyes everywhere... He wants to help you....

For a moment LUCY and SHAMINA are entranced by RENFIELD's strangely singsong speaking, but SHAMINA breaks the spell.

SHAMINA
Wait! Our president?

RENFIELD sees SHAMINA for the first time, and is stunned.

RENFIELD
The White House is full of surprises, Ms...?

SHAMINA
Jones.

For a moment RENFIELD is his old self, and clearly smitten by SHAMINA.

RENFIELD
Jones...

LUCY
The inventor of the StopCom.

RENFIELD
Really? (snaps back to possessed self) Tell me more about it!

LUCY
Sure!

SHAMINA and LUCY cross to the tv, and go into their presentation mode.

SHAMINA
Well, the average family watches over 6 hours of TV daily, of which 87 minutes are commercials.

LUCY
Multiply by the number of households, and that's over two point five trillion hours of wasted energy per year.

SHAMINA
Everybody knows commercials are louder than regular television. StopCom. detects the increased volume of commercials and automatically switches TV into low power sleep mode. No sound,-

LUCY
No picture-

SHAMINA
No power-

LUCY
No waste!

SHAMINA
And when the commercials are over StopCom. wakes the TV back up!

RENFIELD
Fascinating. But does it work?

As if on cue the TV powers up again.

TV ANNOUNCER
Coming up live from South Central Los Angeles, Inner-city Survivor! After this brief message.

TV powers down and says, "StopCom".

SHAMINA
Of course it works!

RENFIELD
You are exactly the sort of people B.I.T.E. is interested in.

LUCY
I'll get the prospectus!

SHAMINA
Luce! (to RENFIELD) Excuse us.

RENFIELD
Certainly...

SHAMINA drags LUCY aside, RENFIELD sneakily follows, listening.

SHAMINA
There has got to be strings attached to any money from this Administration!

LUCY
You were the one complaining about corporate investors. With a government grant we can make StopCom. on our own terms.

RENFIELD cackles out loud, realizes he was heard, and quickly moves away.

RENFIELD
(from across the room)
Of course, if you are not interested there are plenty of others -like Sam's Solar Saunas down the street...

RENFIELD pretends to head to the exit., but is caught by LUCY.

LUCY
Wait! Come on, Shamina... its tax dollars! So it's already our money!

RENFIELD
Your... capital...

LUCY
Our capital...

SHAMINA
Well, government funding could give us credibility.

LUCY
Great! I'll be right back.

LUCY exits.

SHAMINA
Lucy?!

RENFIELD and SHAMINA look at each other for a moment. There is some attraction between them. Embarrassed they turn away.

Shamina
Somehow I can't picture Green Grrl being funded by the Duke of Oil.

Both laugh, RENFIELD rather insanely.

RENFIELD
Don't be fooled, Ms. Jones. The President is not what you think...

SHAMINA
Good, because I think he's the rich idiot son of a pencilnecked criminal. I have to confess, your articles in the Courier inspired me. The time you cornered that P. G. & E. executive...

RENFIELD seems to slowly come out of his trance as SHAMINA speaks of her admiration for his reporter self..

RENFIELD
Yes...

SHAMINA
...and asked him to justify getting a huge bonus...

RENFIELD

Yes...

SHAMINA

...and then you nailed his greedy ass to the wall!

RENFIELD

Yes!

SHAMINA

Didn't you like being a reporter anymore?

For a moment RENFIELD is his old self.

RENFIELD

It was wonderful. But all that's nothing compared with the story I could write now, about the -

A distant wolf howls and RENFIELD screams and hides behind the TV.

SHAMINA

Mr. Renfield?

RENFIELD re-appears, repossessed.

RENFIELD

But as much as I enjoyed nailing asses to walls that was a different lifetime, my dear Ms. Jones.

LUCY re-enters, holding the prospectus.

LUCY

Here it is!

RENFIELD

Excellent. Ms. Jones, Ms. Morgan, we will be in touch. There are some very important people you should meet. Perhaps you could come with me now.. I have a plane waiting.

SHAMINA

Plane? To where?

RENFIELD

Washington D.C.

Thunder crack.

SHAMINA

But the demonstration tomorrow...

RENFIELD

We'll be back in plenty of time...

SHAMINA
I still have some adjustments to make on the StopCom.

LUCY
You stay here and work. I'll go with Mr. Renfield, and be back before you know it.

RENFIELD
I... I really should take both of you...

SHAMINA
Luce can speak for the Company, Mr. Renfield.

RENFIELD
No! Both must go!

RENFIELD awkwardly tries to herd both women to the door, but stops himself before they see him.

LUCY
You take care, green girl, and I'll see you first thing in the morning! And you'll see... your parents are going to be so proud of you!

LUCY and SHAMINA do their special hive five, and LUCY exits.

RENFIELD
That was very brave of you Ms. Jones. Saying all those things about.. the President, about... me...

SHAMINA
Well, it's like my mamma used to say, speak the truth -

The words ring in RENFIELD's mind, bringing him for a moment out of the spell again.

BOTH
- and you've got nothing to be afraid of.

Hearing and speaking his own line stuns RENFIELD.

SHAMINA
I'll see you tomorrow, too, won't I Mr. Renfield?

RENFIELD
(almost like his old self)
I look forward to it, Ms. Jones.

SHAMINA
Shamina.

SHAMINA offers her hand to RENFIELD, who slowly takes it. RENFIELD is touched, and looks longingly into SHAMINA'S eyes.

RENFIELD

Shamina. Gene.

SHAMINA

Gene.

RENFIELD starts to leave, confused, They look at each other for a last lingering moment before RENFIELD turns to exit. Suddenly a wolf howls in the distance, and RENFIELD, is re-possessed. As SHAMINA turns and muses RENFIELD, unseen creeps up behind her...

SHAMINA

Gene Renfield.

RENFIELD, thinking he's been discovered, shrieks at the sound of his own name and leaps behind the TV. SHAMINA turns but seeing nothing returns to her musing.

Shamina

He seemed like a nice guy.

Song: "GUY NAMED GENE"

SHAMINA

JUST THIS MORNING THE FUTURE LOOKED RATHER

PRECARIOUS.

BUT LIFE'S FULL OF SURPRISES

WONDROUS AND VARIOUS!

LIKE THE PRESIDENT'S ALL RIGHT,

WHEN I THOUGHT HE WAS NEFARIOUS.

I FEEL LIKE I'VE STEPPED INTO THE AGE O

AQUARIUS!

AND I THINK I MIGHT HAVE MET SOMEBODY

SPECIAL,

AND THAT HASN'T HAPPENED SINCE I WAS

NINETEEN.

AND I FEEL GOOD THINGS ARE ON THE HORIZON,

AND ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS A GUY NAMED GENE.

While SHAMINA sings RENFIELD, possessed, slowly creeps up on SHAMINA as if ti strangle her.

SHAMINA

AND NOW I CAN SEE THAT THE SYSTEM IS

WORKING

I CAN DO GOOD AND BE WELL PAID

THE SUN'S SHINING BRIGHT WITH NO SHADOWS

LURKING

IT'S ALL WORKING OUT, HAVE I'VE GOT IT MADE?

Unseen by SHAMINA RENFIELD writhes, tormented. Clearly some external power is ordering him to destroy SHAMINA, Overcome by basic goodness and his growing feelings for SHAMINA, RENFIELD wrestles himself off the stage.

SHAMINA

AND I THINK I MIGHT HAVE MET SOMEBODY

SPECIAL

AND THAT HASN'T HAPPENED SINCE I WAS

NINETEEN

AND I FEEL GOOD THINGS ARE ON THE HORIZON

AND ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS A GUY NAMED GENE.

AND ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS A GUY NAMED GENE.

YEAH, ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS A GUY NAMED GENE.

SHAMINA exits.

Velina Brown as SHAMINA Photo by John Carnwath

SCENE 3

A HOSPITAL OFFICE EMERGENCY ROOM.

An INTERN and PROFESSOR VAN HELSING examine a limp patient on a gurney. VAN HELSING is a bit of an fashion anachronism - a rumpled, old school, goateed professor with a Central European accent. He is carrying a massive book.

INTERN
I'm so glad you could take time to consult on this patient, Professor Van Helsing.

VAN HELSING
I always have time for an interesting case, especially from a bright student.

INTERN
I know you were busy, but this case is baffling! A complete personality shift. One day a gentle door to door wheatgrass juice salesman, suddenly he raids his kids college fund, buys a fast food franchise...

VAN HELSING
Now he's rich, divorced, and has a colon impacted with red meat!

INTERN
Why the change?

VAN HELSING
Let us investigate... no sign of injury... no blow to the head... Let's listen to his heart.

VAN HELSING and the INTERN lean down to the patient's chest. A strange, slow beat is heard. A hospital administrator, WILSON, enters. A pencil pusher, he is harassed, upset, and waving papers.

WILSON
Professor Van Helsing, there you are! We need you in the staff meeting! This Hospital could be hit with a blackout any moment, and we've got to cut back somewhere to afford that new generator!

INTERN
(confused)
His heartbeat... It's so slow...

VAN HELSING
Almost as if he were...

INTERN
(checking chart)
X rays... Cat scans normal. According to his chart this man was fine... until a trip last month to the capitol.

VAN HELSING
Washington D.C.?

Thunder clap.

WILSON

Professor Van Helsing!

VAN HELSING

(to INTERN)

Be so kind as to check his blood pressure.

WILSON

Professor Van Helsing you've been a member of this hospital a long time, but I am the Chief Administrator! And if you do not come to this meeting the first budget item I will cut is your department of Psycho-Incorporated Nosferatuology!

INTERN

Blood pressure's normal... one more thing, Professor, probably isn't important, but when he came in he was wearing this!

INTERN hold up a small black cape. Musical sting!

VAN HELSING

Mein Gott! It is as I feared! (he checks patient) Yes... he has all the signs. Odd heartbeat... visited Washington... and this! Quickly we must restrain him before he infects the entire hospital. Look, Mr. Wilson... this is the horror I have fought all my life!

WILSON

What are you babbling about, Professor?

VAN HELSING

There is a spectre haunting this country, Wilson,... something that turns normal people into servants of evil!

WILSON and the INTERN are startled into attention by the word "evil."

INTERN

(horrified)

Something... evil?

VAN HELSING consults his massive book.

VAN HELSING

The personification of greed... It is the highest form of Capitalism. Succubus Incorporatus! Gentlemen, I am talking about... Corporate Bloodsuckers! (eerie music)

WILSON

(scoffing)

Van Helsing, you can't be serious! Corporate bloodsuckers only exist in socialist myths. No one believes in them anymore!

Dismissing the warning WILSON reaches to touch patient.

VAN HELSING

Stay away from him!

VAN HELSING slaps WILSON's hand away.

WILSON

Oow!

VAN HELSING

The strength of the Corporate Bloodsucker is that people don't believe in it!

INTERN

Victor Toman as VAN HELSING, Ed Holmes as WILSON, Amos Glick as INTERN
Photo by John Carnwath

(terrified)

Where does the Bloodsucker come from, Professor?

Song, "LEGAL PEOPLE"

VAN HELSING

SOME SAY IT IS THE BASTARD OFFSPRING
OF THE LEGENDARY FEUDAL BLOODSUCKER
BUT I BELIEVE IT WAS CREATED WHEN
CORPORATIONS WERE DECLARED LEGAL PEOPLE!

INTERN & WILSON *(spoken)*

Legal people?

VAN HELSING

IT WAS EIGHTEEN EIGHTY-SIX,
A LITTLE KNOWN LAND USE CASE HERE IN
CALIFORNIA.
LAWYERS FOR SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
ARGUED THAT THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT -
WHICH DECLARED SLAVES FREE AND EQUAL
CITIZENS -
SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO CORPORATIONS!

INTERN & WILSON *(spoken)*

Corporations?

VAN HELSING

YES! A SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE AGREED,
AND CORPORATIONS BECAME LEGAL PEOPLE,
WITH MANY OF THE RIGHTS OF YOU, OR I,
YET THEY ARE IMMORTAL!

INTERN & WILSON *(spoken)*

Immortal?

VAN HELSING

THEY FEED ON TAX BREAKS, BAILOUTS,
AND THE PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC WEALTH.
AND IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS

THEIR POWER SEEMS TO BE GROWING...

WILSON

This is preposterous!

VAN HELSING

MORE PREPOSTEROUS THAN CORPORATIONS

RUNNING WELFARE SYSTEMS?

TAX BREAKS FOR BILLION DOLLAR COMPANIES

WHILE SOCIAL SERVICES CRUMBLE!

NO HUMAN WOULD CREATE SUCH HORRORS!

ONLY THE INHUMAN MIND… OF THE BLOODSUCKER!

INTERN and WILSON scream.

VAN HELSING *(cont'd spoken)*

But fear not! Every corporation has a charter granted by the sovereign people. If we can revoke that charter...

VAN HELSING *(cont'd singing)*

THE BLOODSUCKER WILL BE DESTROYED!

Suddenly a siren goes off, and SHAMINA is wheeled into the emergency room by an EMT.

EMT

Code blue! Code blue! We got a possible subdural hematoma, sprained metatarsal! BP's 130 over 80!

INTERN

What happened?

EMT

An explosion! She was demonstrating some invention of hers and it blew up!

Ominous music!

SHAMINA

StopCom... Lucy... Look out!

INTERN

Pupils clear... get me 200 cc's of tripsomethatorazine, IV push, stat!

SHAMINA

...machine that saves power ...Lucy and Mr. Renfield....

VAN HELSING

A machine that saves power?

INTERN
(to SHAMINA)
Time to get you upstairs.

SHAMINA
Is she okay? Where's Lucy?

SHAMINA is taken off by the INTERN and EMT.

WILSON
Now Van Helsing, if you are finished with your ghost stories we have to talk about the budget...

VAN HELSING
You will excuse me, Mr. Wilson, I think I should attend to the young lady. I have a few questions.

VAN HELSING exits, following SHAMINA.

WILSON
Spectres and bloodsuckers! Preposterous!

WILSON exits.

SCENE 4

AT 1600 TRANSYLVANIA AVENUE.

A creaky door opens, and RENFIELD enters. He is wearing an embarrassing little apron over his suit, and is slavishly, frantically dusting the White House. A wolf howls in the distance, and RENFIELD cringes. He is the very picture of fearful obsequiousness.

RENFIELD
Master! Where are you, Master? I am your servant, Master!

PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT enter. Both are wearing capes over their suits..

RENFIELD *(cont'd)*
Master! Say, is that a new cape?

PRESIDENT
Gift from my daddy. Have you done as ordered?

RENFIELD
Yes. The machine is destroyed!

PRESIDENT
Renfield, you have done good -

VICE PRESIDENT
...done well.

PRESIDENT
Now you must complete your mission.

RENFIELD
But you promised me power and immortality, and my own cape!

VICE PRESIDENT
Shamina Jones survived the explosion.

RENFIELD
(hopefully)
She did?

PRESIDENT
Now we must make her into one of us! (eerie music)

RENFIELD
One of us? (eerie music) Why? The machine is disgraced!

PRESIDENT
Why is not importenticle!

VICE PRESIDENT

...important.

PRESIDENT

Just do it!

RENFIELD

No one will ever use StopCom. to save electricity!

VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. President, allow me?

PRESIDENT

Alright, but hurry up. I have to practice for the Bloodsucker Ball this Saturday night.

PRESIDENT swoops around, practicing with cape.

VICE PRESIDENT

It is not the electricity, Mr. Renfield it is the commercials. We've been trying to take over this country since it was founded. Almost had it back at 1900, but Trust busters stopped us.

PRESIDENT

(trying out big scary voice)

Foolish mortals!

Checks for effect from VICE PRESIDENT and RENFIELD. There isn't any.

VICE PRESIDENT

During the twenties we rose again, but the Great Depression woke the people up...

RENFIELD

And they created all those social programs.

Suddenly the PRESIDENT starts jerking around as if having a fit, spouting Latin.

PRESIDENT

Ahhhh! Agrafa -ipso carfactotum, regio diabolic!

VICE PRESIDENT

Now see what you've done? Don't say those words!

VICE PRESIDENT calm the PRESIDENT down.

RENFIELD

Social programs?

PRESIDENT jerks around again. The VICE PRESIDENT pulls out a wad of cash, waves it under the President nose, which calms him down.

RENFIELD
Sorry.

VICE PRESIDENT
We tried everything to make people insecure enough to welcome corporate rule: drugs, assassinations, war, Nixon. And finally we realized the best way to take over was just to lull people to sleep.

The tone of their voices change as PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT begin lulling RENFIELD to sleep.

PRESIDENT
Commercials are little dreams of a happy life, Mr. Renfield. A life with only petty concerns.

VICE PRESIDENT
They make people sleep. And while they sleep... we feed! They slept while we fed on corporate regulations 'till we'd sucked them dry, slept while we devoured the unions, they even slept when we had the Supreme Court fix an election!

PRESIDENT
That is why we need Shamina Jones, Mr. Renfield. She made one StopCom... She must not make another.

VICE PRESIDENT
Understand now, Mr. Renfield?

PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT start to exit.

RENFIELD
Please master, not her. Please!

VICE PRESIDENT
Why not Shamina, Mr. Renfield?

RENFIELD
It's just that I think I...

RENFIELD is struggling to say a certain word. It starts with an "L."

RENFIELD
I... loooo... I... loooo...

RENFIELD is trying to say "love," but can't.

VICE PRESIDENT
You what, Mr. Renfield?

RENFIELD
(defeated)
Nothing.

VICE PRESIDENT
Mr. President, if Renfield is unable to make Shamina Jones one of us I know someone who will!

Suddenly LUCY, wearing a stylish cape, sweeps into the room. She has been transformed into a lascivious temptress of evil, and inexplicably has a Transylvanian accent.

RENFIELD

Lucy!

LUCY

How can I help you gentlemen?

VICE PRESIDENT

Your former partner needs another visit from the Bureau.

LUCY

Did my bomb fail?

RENFIELD

I thought she was your friend!

LUCY shoots a look of daggers at RENFIELD, who recoils in fear.)

RENFIELD

Aaaah!

LUCY

She still is... and since she's not dead I'll do her a favor - make her one of us. I know Shamina. Given the chance she'll love the feeling of true power, pulsating... deep... inside her.

LUCY is vamping all over the place, and gets a little on the PRESIDENT, who has an inspiration.

PRESIDENT

(to VICE PRESIDENT)

Hey, can I have interns?

Vice president

No.

LUCY

And she'll thank me. I'm going to raise her up from prey to predator... From one of the sheep to one of... the wolves!

A bunch of wolves howls.

VICE PRESIDENT

(in the spirit of Bela Lugosi)

Listen to them... The children of the night...

PRESIDENT

What beautiful mucous they make!

VICE PRESIDENT

Music! Beautiful music they make!

PRESIDENT

Oh, whatever!

LUCY and PRESIDENT exit, laughing, followed by VICE PRESIDENT. RENFIELD is writing again, battling with himself.

RENFIELD

No, Master! I'll do it! No, I won't! Must... fight... for... soul. Must... get... free! Aaaaah! I'm loosing control of my mind! But I am so weak... And so alone...

Song: "OH MY SHAMINA"

RENFIELD

I THOUGHT I COULD BE IN FOR A NICKEL

IN FOR A NICKEL BUT NOT FOR A DIME.

I'D TAKE JUST THE KIT BUT NOT THE CABOODLE

I'M SINKING IN THE QUICKSAND OF GREED AND

HAVEN'T MUCH TIME!

OH, SHAMINA, SHAMINA, SHAMINA

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN-A

TO ME?

I'M YOUR L-L-L-LOVE SERF, SHAMINA,

AND YOU'RE MY CZARINA

BUT I FEAR YOU AND I WILL NEVER BE.NOW I FIND WHAT I HAD IS WHAT I WANTED,

AND THAT WHO I WAS IS WHO I WANT TO BE.

THE PULITZER WOULD BE MINE FOR THE WINNING

IF I COULD REPORT ALL THE THINGS THAT I SEE.

OH, MY SHAMINA, SHAMINA

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN-A

TO ME?

I'M YOUR L-L-L-LOVE SERF, SHAMINA,

AND YOU'RE MY CZARINA

BUT I FEAR YOU AND I WILL NEVER BE.

BUT I FEAR YOU AND I -

RENFIELD (spoken)

I've got to warn her!

Begins to exit, comes back.

RENFIELD (singing)

WILL NEVER BE WE!

(exits)

Conrad Cimarra as RENFIELD Photo by John Carnwath

SCENE 5

IN THE HOSPITAL.

SHAMINA, recovering from her "accident," is walking with VAN HELSING, who is still carrying his massive book..

SHAMINA
...Actually Green Grrl Industries was Lucy's idea. She'd just been laid off by something stupid dot com, I'd finished my advanced in electronics at U.C., and we were broke. And she said it was either phone sex or electronics. So we started Green Grrl.

VAN HELSING
How are you feeling now, my dear?

SHAMINA
Much better, Professor Van Helsing. Thank you.

VAN HELSING
Tell me more about your invention.

Suddenly a strange electrical sound is heard.

SHAMINA
What was that?

VAN HELSING
Must be another rolling blackout. But we're okay - the Hospital has an emergency generator.

Almost magically LUCY enters.

LUCY
Shamina!

SHAMINA
Lucy! Where have you been?

LUCY
Checking every hospital in town. I couldn't rest until I... got my hands on you.

VAN HELSING
Is this your partner?

SHAMINA
Professor van Helsing, Lucy Morgan.

LUCY
A pleasure to meet you, Professor.

SHAMINA
Lucy, are you okay? You were so close to the StopCom. when it blew up.

Anastasia Coon as LUCY, Velina Brown as SHAMINA
Photo by John Carnwath

LUCY
Just a bump on the head, and a strange pain in my neck... (eerie music)

VAN HELSING
What sort of pain?

LUCY
It's all better now!

VAN HELSING
So soon?

LUCY
I'm a quick healer, Professor.

VAN HELSING
Don't be silly. It will only take a second...

VAN HELSING tries to examine LUCY, but she begins to have a strange, almost feral reaction. They are interrupted by the strange electrical sound again, followed by alarm.

INTERCOM VOICE
All staff report immediately to administrators office! All available staff immediately report to Administrator's office!

VAN HELSING
The old generator must be giving out! Pardon me, ladies. I'll be right back.

VAN HELSING exits. The sound seems to bee especially irritating to LUCY.

LUCY
I wish all this noise would stop!

LUCY makes a strangling gesture in the air.

INTERCOM VOICE
All staff report immediately to the ....arrrgh!

The siren stops with the INTERCOM'S strangled cut off.

LUCY
That's much better. Quiet and alone.

SHAMINA
Are you sure you're alright, Lucy? You look a little... different.

LUCY
Strange, I feel wonderful. Everything makes sense to me now.

SHAMINA
That makes one of us..

LUCY
Oh, poor Shamina! This has been very hard on you. All your work up in smoke. You should try to rest, dear. You must be very tired.

SHAMINA
I don't feel tired.

LUCY
Well, you look tired! Just... sit down... Relax.

SHAMINA crosses to sit, and LUCY moves in behind her, preparing s to cover SHAMINA with her cape. Suddenly SHAMINA changes her mind and crosses away from the chair. LUCY squirms in frustration, decides to try another tactic.

LUCY (cont'd)
(casting a *soothing* spell)
Just think of all the wonderful inventions that we'll create. Just think about all the power we'll help conserve... and all the money people will save... Just think about the power and money... Power and money... I know everything is going to be just fine. Relax. Important people are interested in StopCom and you.

Song: "THE WINNING SIDE"

LUCY

DON'T FIGHT THE POWER, GO WITH IT.

SAY YES, NOT NO, THAT'S THE TICKET!

BETER TO WIN THAN BE BEATEN,

BETTER TO EAT THAN BE EATEN -

SHAMINA
I just can't figure out what went wrong with the StopCom.

LUCY
Shamina.

LUCY begins to hypnotize SHAMINA.

LUCY *(cont'd singing)*

DON'T RESIST US, DON'T EVEN TRY,

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE,

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE,

COME ON OVER TO THE WIN-

SHAMINA has been hypnotized into the chair and LUCY sweeps her cape over her, but at that moment VAN HELSING returns, recognizes the danger to SHAMINA.

VAN HELSING

Away, foul Demon!

VAN HELSING grabs LUCY and throws her across the room

Shamina!

VAN HELSING snaps his fingers and wakes the dazed SHAMINA.

SHAMINA

Professor...?

VAN HELSING

She is not your friend, Shamina... She is a Bloodsucker!

LUCY

(pitifully, as if hurt)

Don't listen to him, Shamina!

VAN HELSING

I saw it all on the nurse's security camera! Leave here, evil creature... Or will you call your master to bail you out... like a failed S&L?

LUCY

(suddenly menacing)

You know too much to live, Van Helsing!

LUCY lunges for SHAMINA, but VAN HELSING pulls her out of the way.

VAN HELSING

Shamina!

SHAMINA

Professor! What is going on?

LUCY grabs VAN HELSING and pushes him out of her way. LUCY closes in on SHAMINA. VAN HELSING hits LUCY with his book.

VAN HELSING

Trust me Shamina!

VAN HELSING gives SHAMINA his book for protection. LUCY starts to strangle VAN HELSING. VAN HELSING pulls her off of him, grabs her head and slams it against his knee. SHAMINA rushes to her friends rescue.

SHAMINA

Lucy, are you alright?

LUCY
(pitiful)
Help me, Shamina!

SHAMINA hits the PROFESSOR with his own book. LUCY and VAN HELSING are about to lunge at one another when the alarms go off again. Suddenly there is a blackout! (Not really. The actors play as if all the lights are out.)

SHAMINA
The lights! What's happening?

LUCY & VAN HELSING
A blackout!

VAN HELSING
The old generator must have blown!

VAN HELSING and LUCY hunt each other in the "dark".

LUCY
I will find you, Van Helsing! You can't hide in the dark forever, old fool!

VAN HELSING
Neither can you, vile bloodsucker!

SHAMINA
What the hell are you two talking about?

Suddenly the lights come back "on", and the two see each other and begin to struggle.

SHAMINA
Finally!

VAN HELSING
They fixed it!

SHAMINA
Now what is the...

LUCY hypnotizes SHAMINA again. VAN HELSING grabs LUCY, pulls her away and snaps his fingers to wake SHAMINA. LUCY grabs VAN HELSING by his nipples, twists, and pushes him away, and again hypnotizes SHAMINA. VAN HELSING grabs LUCY'S arm, spins her around and snaps his fingers at SHAMINA. LUCY again hypnotizes SHAMINA as VAN HELSING spins her, again snapping his fingers at SHAMINA. VAN HELSING lets go of LUCY, who spins towards the window. Just before she falls out out the window LUCY quickly hypnotizes SHAMINA one more time but VAN HELSING snaps his fingers. LUCY falls out the window to her apparent death.

LUCY

Aaaaaaaaaah!

SHAMINA gasps, seeing VAN HELSING kill her friend. Splat!

SHAMINA

(horrified)

Professor! What have you done?

VAN HELSING

It is not what you think, dear Shamina -

SHAMINA

You... you murdered Lucy! Stay away from me! Murderer!

SHAMINA runs panic stricken from the room.

VAN HELSING

Wait! No! It is not what you think! Come back!

VAN HELSING pursues SHAMINA out..

SCENE 6

THE OFFICE OF GREEN GIRL INDUSTRIES.

Same as second scene, except the StopCom. TV is clearly broken. RENFIELD enters.

RENFIELD
Hello? Shamina? Is anyone here?

A CUSTODIAN enters, slams down trash can.

RENFIELD
Aaaaah! Who are you? What are you doing? Where's Shamina Jones?

CUSTODIAN removes the "INTRODUCING STOPCOM." sign and puts it in a trash can.

CUSTODIAN
Hospital downtown. Her partner Lucy just went to visit. (eerie music!) Came here first, though. Told me to dump all this stuff, 'cuz she just sold Green Grrl Industries to Transylvanian Technologies. (music sting)

RENFIELD
And StopCom?

CUSTODIAN
Dead. From now on they're gonna be making gasoline powered air conditioners down in Tierra Del Fuego! (CUSTODIAN does a short salsa.) Apparently there's a bunch of poor little girls down there who really need factory jobs.

CUSTODIAN leaves.

RENFIELD
I've got to get to the hospital before...

SHAMINA enters. RENFIELD sees her and they both scream.

SHAMINA AND RENFIELD
Aaaahhhhh!

SHAMINA
Mr. Renfield!

RENFIELD
Holy Shamina! Wait!

RENFIELD spins SHAMINA around, examines her back.

RENFIELD
You don't have a cape! I'm not too late!

RENFIELD hugs SHAMINA, who is more than a little surprised.

RENFIELD
I came to warn you... To save you!

SHAMINA
That maniac Van Helsing! He... he killed Lucy! Pushed her from a window!

RENFIELD
Thank goodness!

SHAMINA
Thank goodness?

RENFIELD
This man, Van Helsing, he saved you! Lucy wasn't your friend anymore!

SHAMINA
You're as crazy as he is!

RENFIELD
Listen! They come to you... offer you... things. Money, power, stock options! They find your weakness, make you one of them, just like they did to Lucy. Just like they did...me. I'm one of them, Shamina!

Ashamed, RENFIELD removes his jacket and shows SHAMINA that he is wearing a small, rather pitiful home-made cape.

RENFIELD
But I don't want to hurt anyone. Especially you, because I... I... loooo... I loooo... (still can't say "love") I just asked him for a little power... he promised me...

SHAMINA
What are you talking about? He who?

RENFIELD
The Master! He -

Suddenly a large BAT flaps menacingly onto the stage, squeaking loudly. RENFIELD cringes.

RENFIELD
(speaking to the BAT)
No, Master! I told her nothing! Nothing!

The BAT squeaks at him.

RENFIELD
Well, okay I did tell her that...

The BAT squeaks again.

RENFIELD
Yes, and that. And that. But I'm loyal to you master! Loyal!

The BAT flies off.

SHAMINA

Mr. Renfield... Gene...

SHAMINA reaches out and touches RENFIELD. RENFIELD screams.

RENFIELD

Aaaah! (snarling) Get your hands off me! (suddenly very sorry) The Master has marked you, and no one can save you !

RENFIELD begins to exit, stops, turns, genuinely sorrowful.

RENFIELD

I'm sorry.

RENFIELD slinks off, and SHAMINA tries to follow, but suddenly LUCY appears!. LUCY has a stop sign stuck through her chest. Under normal circumstances this would be fatal.

LUCY

Hello, Shamina!

SHAMINA

(happily surprised)

Lucy!

SHAMINA sees the stop sign, realizes VAN HELSING was right. SHAMINA is horrified and frightened.

SHAMINA

Lucy!!

Reprise: "THE WINNING SIDE"

LUCY

COME BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE,

YOU'LL HAVE MUCH MORE, MORE THAN YOU

COULD NEED.

COME DRINK FROM THE OVERFLOWIN' CUP,

THE WORLD IS OURS, LET'S USE IT UP.

DON'T RESIST US, DON'T EVEN TRY,

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE.

LUCY is slowly casting her spell over SHAMINA

COME TO THE POWER, COME TO THE MONEY,

WE OWN THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY.

COME, BE SMART. COME, BE RATIONAL,

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE TRANSNATIONAL!

BETTER TO WIN THAN BE BEATEN,

BETTER TO EAT THAN TO BE EATEN,

DON'T RESIST US, DON'T EVEN TRY,

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE...

SHAMINA *(under spell)*

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE...

BOTH

COME ON OVER TO THE WINNING SIDE...

LUCY

COME JOIN WITH WE WHO WILL NOT DIE!

SHAMINA, mesmerized, disappears behind LUCY'S cape for a moment. A wolf howls in the distance. Suddenly VAN HELSING enters.

VAN HELSING

Away again, foul demon!

VAN HELSING grabs LUCY, pulling her away from SHAMINA, who is still mesmerized. VAN HELSING wrestles with LUCY, and after a brief struggle LUCY falls out of a window, again.

LUCY

Damn you Van Helsing! Aaaaaaaaaah!

Splat!

VAN HELSING

Now do you believe? Now you see the evil?

SHAMINA

(still mesmerized)

I though she made a lot of sense...

VAN HELSING

What?

SHAMINA

I don't have anything in common with these losers! They're just Leftist crybabies who sit on their blankets watching free shows in the park because they're too cheap to pay for real theatre!

VAN HELSING grabs SHAMINA and snaps his fingers

VAN HELSING

Shamina!

SHAMINA wakes from the spell.

SHAMINA

Professor! What did I say? What's happening to me?

VAN HELSING

You are falling under the spell of the Bloodsucker. If we don't act fast you will become one of them!

SHAMINA

Oh no!

VAN HELSING

There is only one way to free you from this spell and end poor Lucy's torment. We must defeat the King of the Bloodsuckers in his lair. Fear not... I have a friend who will help us, an old student of mine who I'm sure he is not under any spell. He will help us! We have a plane to catch. Come!

They exit.

The CELEBRANTS Photo by John Carnwath

SCENE 7

THE WHITE HOUSE.

A group of robed, hooded CELEBRANTS enter, performing a mystical ritual.

Song: "CORPUS INCORPORALAE"

ALL

CORPUS INCORPORIALAE,

PILLAGES ELECTORALAE,

CELEBRATUM CELEBREMUS,

KUDOS TO THE COURT SUPREMUS!

A large scroll - the Charter - is produced. This is the focus of the celebration.

LEAD CELEBRANT

ALL HAIL THE CHARTER!

CELEBRANT #1

FROM WHICH ALL BLESSINGS FLOW,

LEAD CELEBRANT

WITH THE RIGHTS OF A REAL PERSON,

CELEBRANT #1

IT IS ETERNAL,

LEAD CELEBRANT & CELEBRANT #1

BOW LOW, BOW LOW

ALL

IT IS ETERNAL, BOW LOW, BOW LOW!

LEAD CELEBRANT

ALL PLEDGE: THE PHILOSOPHIA LIBERTARIANISMI CORPORATI,

CELEBRANT #2

TO CONSUME IS THE ULTIMATE EXPReSSION OF HUMANITY,

ALL

- MANITY!

CELEBRANT #1

THE GREATNESS OF A COUNTRY IS MEASURED BY ITS GNP -

ALL

...NP!

CELEBRANT #1

WHEN SOMEBODY GETS RICH IT BENEFITS SOCIETY -

ALL

...CIETY!

LEAD CELEBRANT

ESPECIALLY -

ALL

...CIALLY -

LEAD CELEBRANT

WHEN THE SOMEBODY GETTING RICH IS WE!

RENFIELD, with feather duster and wearing apron, enters to straighten up. The CELEBRANTS begin a ritualistic dance with the Charter, passing it from one to another,, during the course of which they inadvertently involve RENFIELD.

CELEBRANTS

WE, WE, WE, WE

OH BOUNTIFUL EARTH, WE'RE USING YOU UP!

WE, WE, WE, WE

WERE DRINKING DRY THE OVERFLOWING CUP!

AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT MUST BE

FOR IT IS WE, WE, WE, WE,

WE WHO ARE THE END OF HISTORY!

LEAD CELEBRANT

THIS COUNTRY WAS CREATED WITH CORPORATE CHARTERS,

FOR VIRGINIA AND NEW ENGLAND AND THE HUDSON BAY,

CHARTERED CORPORATIONS BROUGHT THE SLAVES TO LABOR,

CHARTERED CORPORATIONS RULE THE WORLD TODAY!

In course of dance RENFIELD has ended up with Charter.

CELEBRANTS

WE, WE, WE, WE

OH BOUNTIFUL EARTH, WEíRE USING YOU UP!

WE, WE, WE, WE

WERE DRINKING DRY THE OVERFLOWING CUP,

AND THAT IS THE WAY THAT IT MUST BE!

FOR IT IS WE, WE, WE, WE,

WE WHO ARE THE END OF HISTORY!

The CELEBRANTS perform a demonic, ecstatic dance.

CELEBRANTS

CELEBRATUM CELEBREMUS,

KUDOS TO THE COURT SUPREMUS.

The CELEBRANTS, Conrad Cimarra as RENFIELD Photo by John Carnwath

The ceremony has ended, and the CELEBRANTS exit leaving RENFIELD, who still has the Charter. RENFIELD opens the Charter, out of which comes a diabolical voice, speaking Latin. Frightened RENFIELD slams the Charter shut, and fearfully exits.

After a moment a trap door opens in the floor, and VAN HELSING'S head appears through it. After making sure the coast is clear, he enters, followed by SHAMINA.

VAN HELSING

Come. We must find the lair of the Bloodsucker.

SHAMINA

Professor...

VAN HELSING

Shhh!

SHAMINA

How did you know about these tunnels?

VAN HELSING
From my days as a White House intern during World War II. They were built in case of air raids, and for the President's... uh, special female visitors.

SHAMINA
In the White House?

VAN HELSING
In those days competence was more important than infidelity. Fighting for the common citizen, standing up to big business, and defeating fascism - that was how we judged a President.

As he speaks, and unseen by VAN HELSING SHAMINA is falling back under the spell of the Bloodsucker.

SHAMINA
But... the President should be judged by the bottom line...

VAN HELSING notices, snaps his fingers at SHAMINA. No effect.

SHAMINA
(still mesmerized)
Not by some socialist ideal that helps the poor at the expense of the rich!

VAN HELSING
Shamina!

VAN HELSING snaps again. No effect.

SHAMINA
(becoming more sensuously evil)
The market is a living, breathing thing!

VAN HELSING
Shamina!

VAN HELSING grabs SHAMINA, shakes her.

SHAMINA
What?

VAN HELSING slaps her. SHAMINA comes to, realizes she'd fallen into a trance.

SHAMINA (cont'd)
Oh! Not again!

VAN HELSING
The power of the Bloodsucker is getting stronger. You were saying strange, crazy things! We must find that other tunnel!

VAN HELSING closes the trap door they entered through and, at the same time, the another trap door opens. SHAMINA alerts the doctor.

VAN HELSING (cont'd)
Hurry! We have no time to lose!

They exit through the secret door.

SCENE 8

AN ORNATE OFFICE, IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

There is a large gargoyle head, and a throne-like chair upstage. SHAMINA and VAN HELSING poke their heads into the room.

SHAMINA
Is this...?

VAN HELSING
The lair of the Bloodsucker.

A wolf howls.

SHAMINA
Can't we just shoot the Bloodsucker with a silver bullet?

VAN HELSING
That's werewolves.

SHAMINA
Drive a stake through his heart?

VAN HELSING
Vampires.

SHAMINA
Work with me!

VAN HELSING
There is only one way to defeat a bloodsucker: find its charter...

A wolf howls.

VAN HELSING (cont'd)
...and destroy it!

SHAMINA
I really want to use a stake.

VAN HELSING
We'll see.

SHAMINA
After we destroy the Bloodsucker what'll happen to Lucy?

VAN HELSING
She will be saved.

SHAMINA
Thank goodness she'll be okay!

VAN HELSING
Actually, she'll be dead... But she will be saved from being a bloodsucker!

SHAMINA
What about me?

VAN HELSING
Back to your old self - theoretically.

SHAMINA
Theoretically? What do you mean? Haven't you done this before?

VAN HELSING
It doesn't exactly come up very often, does it? When was the last time you heard of a corporation having it's charter revoked?

VAN HELSING and SHAMINA turn to see the VICE PRESIDENT enter. The VICE PRESIDENT is his normal, humble self.

VAN HELSING
My old student!

VICE PRESIDENT
Professor Van Helsing? Is that you?

SHAMINA
The Vice President?

VAN HELSING
My star pupil and straight A student in Corporate Demonology at the University of Wyoming. Mr. Vice President, Shamina Jones.

VICE PRESIDENT
Pleasure. Professor, how did you get into the White House?

VAN HELSING
Never mind, old friend. I have frightening news: I believe there is a corporate Bloodsucker in the Oval Office!

VICE PRESIDENT
The President? No!

VAN HELSING
The President, yes! You remember the signs? Believe me, he is a servant of evil.

VICE PRESIDENT
Have you told anyone else this, Professor?

VAN HELSING
No; as soon as I was sure we came straight here.

VICE PRESIDENT
Then there is no time to lose! You stay here- I'll go get help!

VICE PRESIDENT exits.

SHAMINA
Was that a good idea? He could be one of them.

VAN HELSING
I know the man, Shamina. He was the only one to speak out when the University cut funding for my Satanic Greed research.

SHAMINA
Okay... But the Vice President always struck me as kind of, well, a dick.

Suddenly the PRESIDENT and RENFIELD enter. The PRESIDENT is wearing his ornate cape, and RENFIELD is a mindless, sniveling slave at his side.

PRESIDENT
So, you mortals think you can assassinize the King of the Bloodsuckers? You have no idea who you are dealing with!

The PRESIDENT swoops over, terrorizing the two, as RENFIELD cackles hysterically. The suddenly the President pulls up short.

PRESIDENT
Renfield! Take care of them!

RENFIELD cackles and quickly creeps over to VAN HELSING and SHAMINA, who cringe in anticipation.

RENFIELD
(polite)
Coffee? Tea? The first daughter left some bourbon -

PRESIDENT
No! Kill them!

RENFIELD
(horrified at the thought)
Me?

The PRESIDENT's power over RENFIELD seems to weaken. The PRESIDENT tries to re-establish control over RENFIELD's mind.

PRESIDENT
With them out of the way it will all be yours, Renfield. Power...

RENFIELD
(falling under the PRESIDENT's spell)
Power...

President

Money...

RENFIELD

Money...

PRESIDENT

A big, new cape...

RENFIELD

Big new cape!

PRESIDENT

All that stands in the way of you achieviating it is these mortals!

RENFIELD, under the power of the PRESIDENT, and his own greed, turns on SHAMINA and VAN HELSING.

RENFIELD

Power... Money... Big new cape...

SHAMINA

Mr. Renfield, no!

VAN HELSING

Stay back, Shamina!

RENFIELD

Power -

SHAMINA

Remember the Courier? Green Grrl?

RENFIELD

Money -

SHAMINA

A chance to make a difference!

RENFIELD

A big, new cape -

SHAMINA

Mr. Renfield... Gene!

SHAMINA slaps the shit out of RENFIELD, who shakes off the spell of the PRESIDENT for a moment.

RENFIELD

Shamina?

SHAMINA

Gene!

PRESIDENT

Finish her!

The PRESIDENT tries to re-capture RENFIELD's mind. RENFIELD is tortured, between his greed and his love for SHAMINA. In turn RENFIELD threatens VAN HELSING and SHAMINA, and writhes in torment. Finally, summoning all his will, he manages to shout:

RENFIELD

Social programs!

At the sound of the words the PRESIDENT writhes in agony, spouting Latin.

PRESIDENT

Fons piatatus! Davidas turis!

The PRESIDENT shrinks as RENFIELD gains strength.

RENFIELD

Social programs!

PRESIDENT

Flammis diabolic Regium!

RENFIELD

Social programs!

PRESIDENT

Ipso facto burrito muerto...

The PRESIDENT crumples to the floor, vanquished but not quite dead. Pause.

RENFIELD

That's it?

SHAMINA

(hopefully)

Now a stake through the heart?

VAN HELSING

Strange... I didn't think it would be that easy to defeat the king of the Bloodsuckers.

PRESIDENT

(weakly)

That is because... I am not the -

Suddenly the VICE PRESIDENT, in a huge, fur edged cape, enters.

VICE PRESIDENT
The King of the Bloodsuckers!

VAN HELSING
You!

RENFIELD
Him!

VICE PRESIDENT
Me!

SHAMINA
Dick.

VAN HELSING
I should have known! (indicates PRESIDENT) No bloodsucker could be that stupid!

PRESIDENT
(to VICE PRESIDENT)
I did the best I could Master. But they...

VICE PRESIDENT
Scram punk!

PRESIDENT exits, as RENFIELD leaps in front of SHAMINA to defend her with his only weapon.

RENFIELD
Social programs! Social programs!

RENFIELD's words have no effect.

VICE PRESIDENT
It will take a lot more than social programs to save yourselves, Mr. Renfield!

The VICE PRESIDENT gestures at RENFIELD, who screams and is immobilized.

VICE PRESIDENT
Besides, what makes you think the country wants to be woken up, Ms. Jones?

The VICE PRESIDENT gestures at SHAMINA, who also screams and is immobilized.

VICE PRESIDENT (cont'd)
Your legislatures have given bloodsuckers unregulated power, and in return we're giving this country the highest standard of living the world has ever seen! An SUV in every garage, and a genetically altered chicken in every pot. Your precious citizens don't give a damn who rules them as long as they're comfortable, Van Helsing! That's why they haven't lifted a finger to stop us! Almost half of these fools voted for us last November, and the other half watched us steal the

election as if it were just another TV show. Face it, Van Helsing, the class war is over- now is the Reign of the Bloodsucker!

A bunch of wolves howl.

SHAMINA
If only we had found that charter!

RENFIELD pulls the Charter out from under his cape.

RENFIELD
You mean this?

VICE PRESIDENT
Where did you get that?

RENFIELD
You gave it to me during the ceremony.

VICE PRESIDENT
Give it back!

VICE PRESIDENT lunges at scroll. RENFIELD and SHAMINA fight for it, but the VICE PRESIDENT ends up with it. He laughs, and then casts a spell on RENFIELD and SHAMINA, moving them both around like puppets. The VICE PRESIDENT makes the two of them turn menacingly on VAN HELSING.

Suddenly LUCY enters. In addition to the stop sign through her chest LUCY now with a one-way sign through her head. She is really, really UnDead.

LUCY
Shamina!

As LUCY lunges for SHAMINA she is caught by VAN HELSING. He spins her around, using her to keep the mind controlled RENFIELD and SHAMINA at bay.

VAN HELSING
Die again, foul agent of profit!

VAN HELSING lets go, and LUCY is flung across the room, impaling the VICE PRESIDENT on the stop sign pole sticking out of her stomach. the VICE PRESIDENT and LUCY both seem to be dead, and RENFIELD and SHAMINA are released for the spell. But suddenly LUCY and the VICE PRESIDENT awaken, laughing their evil laugh!.

VICE PRESIDENT
This can not stop me, Van Helsing!

SHAMINA
No, but this can!

SHAMINA grabs the Charter from the VICE PRESIDENT's hand and tears it in half. VICE PRESIDENT and LUCY writhe and scream. At the moment of her death LUCY is finally freed for the spell of the Bloodsucker. LUCY turns, grateful, to SHAMINA.

LUCY

Thank you, Shamina!

LUCY, dying, disappears offstage.

VICE PRESIDENT

You can't kill me, Van Helsing! I'll be back! I'll... be... back!!!!!

VICE PRESIDENT dies in a puff of smoke, or whatever is theatrically feasible.

RENFIELD

I'm... I'm free of his power! I'm free!

RENFIELD takes off his tiny cape, tosses it down.

And Shamina I looo...

SHAMINA

Oh, spit it out!

SHAMINA smacks RENFIELD on back

RENFIELD

Love you! I can say it! I love you.

SHAMINA and RENFIELD kiss.

VAN HELSING

We vanquished the Bloodsucker, but until the law is changed we will always be haunted by corporations as... legal people!

SHAMINA & RENFIELD

Legal people?

SHAMINA

At least the country is safe for now.

The PRESIDENT, without cape, enters, with a SECRET SERVICE AGENT.

PRESIDENT

There they are! Get them!

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Yes, Mr. President.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT pulls gun and herds SHAMINA, VAN HELSING, and RENFIELD away from PRESIDENT.

VAN HELSING

What is this?

RENFIELD

I work here!

PRESIDENT

Not any more.

SHAMINA

Mr. President, we freed you from the Bloodsucker!

PRESIDENT

That's right, cutie. Now I can do whatever I want without heartattack boy looking over my shoulder.

RENFIELD, SHAMINA, VAN HELSING

(in mutual agreement)

Social -

SECRET SERVICE AGENT points his gun at RENFIELD, SHAMINA and VAN HELSING, shutting them up before they can finish the words.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Should I... take care of them?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT gestures with gun.

PRESIDENT

Naw... Bloodsuckers? Who's going to believe them? And besides, Ms. Jones, nobody will buy StopCom. Americans love commercials. Whasuuuup?

VAN HELSING

We will fight you, malignant creature! The people will rise up and revoke you... You shall be defeated!

SECRET SERVICE AGENT ushers a protesting SHAMINA, VAN HELSING and RENFIELD out the door. PRESIDENT adjusts cape, sweeps around stage for a second before looking out at the audience.

PRESIDENT

Who's you President now, baby? Who's your President now? And what are you gonna do about it?

End of show

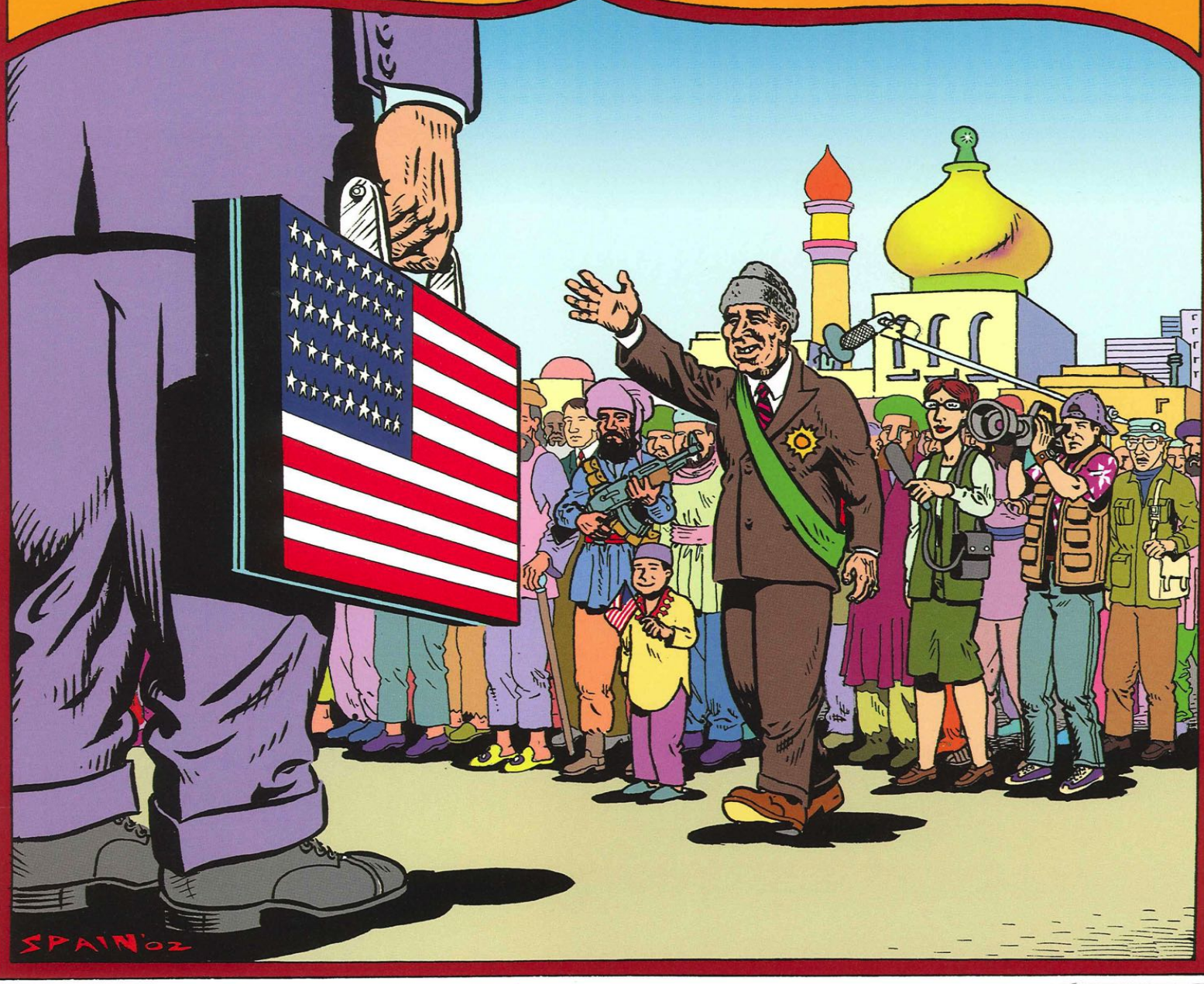
Velina Brown as Shamina, Conrad Cimarra, as Renfield Photo by David Allen

Mr. Smith Goes To Obscuristan

Script by
Josh Kornbluth and Michael Gene Sullivan

Music by Jason Sherbundy, Lyrics by Bruce Barthol

MISTER SMITH GOES TO OBSCURISTAN



The dangerous adventures of Western nations in oil-rich countries have mainly centered on two things: #1: Controlling Oil fields, and #2: disguising #1.

So the toppling of every leader, the wrecking of each economy, the bombing of cities, the civilian casualties, and the seizing of national resources is always in the name of one thing - Freedom! Even if it means promoting and supporting dictators, because nothing says freedom like a ruthless demagogue installed for the benefit of corporate enrichment.

And the fall of the Soviet Union left a bunch strongmen in former republics looking for a new sponsor in efforts to uplift their nations - and by uplift they mean enrich, and by nations they mean themselves.

Freedom! Democracy! And so what if they are the only candidate in an election? The important thing is we can say an election-event took place.

But what if the United States, in its effort to be supportive, sends a true believer to observe an election in one of these oil-rich, freedom-starved nations?

Oops.

And what would it be like if all these questions were answered in the style of Frank Capra meets Gilbert and Sullivan?

“One of the greatest pleasures of my years as the theater critic for the SF Examiner was the opportunity to cover the work of the San Francisco Mime Troupe each year. This theater collective with a distracting name (they don't do what's conventionally understood as mime at all) has been carting its free outdoor shows to Bay Area parks in the summer for over 40 years now. It has managed to invent its own tradition, mixing sharp political satire and musical comedy in the vein of 19th-century melodrama -- think Gilbert & Sullivan meets "Dr. Strangelove" meets Brecht, with doses of vaudeville and Mad magazine thrown in for fun. The motivation is progressive politics, but the method is pure comedy.

This year's show, "Mr. Smith Goes to Obscuristan," borrows its plot structure from Capra's "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," transplanting the action to a mythical Central Asian country and transforming the hero into Jefferson Smith, a firefighter-hero of 9/11 who gets drafted by the Bush administration to observe the first "free" elections in Obscuristan. There are jabs about the U.S.'s last "fixed" election; merciless mockery of President Bush, Dick Cheney and even Barbara Bush; gags about Internet-connected mullahs and a shadowy opposition candidate named "Ralif Nadir"; and, beyond the jokes, a thoughtful tracing of the distinction between honest post-9/11 patriotism and good old American jingoism, self-interest and hypocrisy. See it if you're in the area.”
SALON.COM

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Marcie Chang
Ambassador Penny Payne
Automaht Regurgitov
Ralif Nadir
Diz Deletabit
Dick Cheney
President George Bush
Condoleezza Rice
Jefferson Smith
Mustafa
Goon
Mullah Abdullah

MR. SMITH GOES TO OBSCURISTAN opened on July 4th, 2002, in Dolores Park,
San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan and Keiko Shimosato Carriero, with the following cast:

Marcie Chang……Keiko Shimosato Carriero*
Ambassador Penny Payne, Condoleezza Rice……..Velina Brown*
Automaht Regurgitov, Moose……Victor Toman*
Diz Deletabit, Goon……..Michael Carriero
Dick Cheney, Mullah Abdullah……..Ed Holmes*
Jefferson Smith……Michael Gene Sullivan*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

A STREET IN OBSCURISTAN.

A dusty, barren street in a dusty, barren town in central Asia. SNN reporter MARCIE CHANG prepares for a live newscast.

A blast of SNN theme music.

SNN ANNOUNCER

This... is SNN!

MARCIE beams at the "camera" (the audience).

MARCIE

Marcie Chang here, with a special live report from Obscuristan. ... Unlike its neighbors -- Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan -- Obscuristan has no natural resources whatsoever. To make matters worse, last year hurricane-level winds sheared off the topsoil -- making this the first desert nation ever forced to import sand. A sad new twist to the term "dirt poor." ... But recently, America has begun to show a keen interest in this former Soviet republic.

Nearby a member of the Obscuristani Presidential Security Squad (GOON) enters, carrying a podium. GOON quickly scans the area, places the podium, and stands at attention. U.S. AMBASSADOR PENNY PAYNE, mid-fifties, enters waving to the camera..

MARCIE (cont'd)

And no one personifies that interest more than U.S. Ambassador Penny Payne.

PAYNE

Hello, Marcie.

MARCIE

Madame Ambassador, has your past experience as a civil rights prosecutor helped prepare you for this ambassadorial assignment in Obscuristan?

PAYNE

(to camera)

Selma, Washington, Montgomery, Obscuristan. ... The march to freedom never ends, Marcie. And now that we finally have free and fair elections at home, we would be remiss if we didn't spread the love to our friends here. All they need is a strong leader who can help us help him help his people help themselves to a big heaping helping of freedom.

MARCIE

Pithily put.

PAYNE

Thank you.

MARCIE

No, thank you.

PAYNE waves to the camera, and walks away.

MARCIE (cont'd)
(to camera)

And, indeed, help may now be on the way for the long-suffering Obscuristani people. In a few moments their longtime commander-in-chief, Automaht Regurgitov, is expected to spell out a slate of political reforms in a speech being carried exclusively on SNN.

A FANFARE is heard.

MARCIE (cont'd)

And I believe Mr. Regurgitov is approaching now!

A CHORUS of Obscuristani soldiers enter; in their midst is AUTOMAHT REGURGITOV (Sixties, gaudily dressed in a combination of Russian and Obscuristani styles).

Song: "MR. OBSCURISTANI"

CHORUS

HE'S THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY,

HE'S THE LEADER OF THE STATE,

HE'S THE MAIN MAN OF THE COUNTRY,

HE'S A REAL POTENTATE!

HE'S MR. OBSCURISTANI,

HE'S WIDE AND HE IS DEEP,

HE IS THE NATION'S SHEPHERD,

WE ARE HIS LITTLE SHEEP!

REGURGITOV

I WAS LEADER OF THE COUNTRY

IN THE BAD OLD SOVIET DAYS.

THEN I GAVE TO YOU YOUR FREEDOM,

AND I CHANGED THE BAD OLD WAYS!

THOUGH YOU USED TO LIVE MUCH LONGER,

AND YOU HAD MUCH MORE TO EAT,
I THINK THE NEW OBSCURISTAN
IS REALLY VERY NEAT!

CHORUS

HE THINKS THE NEW OBSCURISTAN
IS REALLY VERY NEAT!

REGURGITOV

I CURED THE ILLS OF COLLECTIVIZATION
WITH COMPLETE PRIVATIZATION,
AND WITH A LITTLE EXPROPRIATION
I NOW OWN EVERY INDUSTRY
IN THE ENTIRE NATION!

CHORUS

HE NOW OWNS EVERY INDUSTRY
IN THE ENTIRE NATION!

REGURGITOV

WE USED TO LIKE THE RUSSIANS ,
NOW AMERICA'S OUR FRIEND .
IF YOU KNOW WHICH WAY THE WIND BLOWS
YOU KNOW WHICH WAY TO BEND!
WE WISH TO CULTIVATE THIS FRIENDSHIP
AND WE DO NOT WISH REJECTION,
AMERICA HAS SAID IT'S TIME
WE HAD FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS!

CHORUS

AMERICA HAS SAID IT'S TIME

WE HAD FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS!

AMBASSADOR PAYNE

LET US BE THE FIRST TO OFFER OUR

CONGRATULATIONS,

AND WELCOME YOU TO THE FAMILY OF

DEMOCRATIC NATIONS.

LIKE SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, AND PAKISTAN

WHO FIGHT TERRORISM AND SUPPORT

THE HUMAN RIGHTS

OF EVERY WOMAN AND EVERY MAN!

REGURGITOV

SO CITIZENS OF OBSCURISTAN

LET'S PROVE THAT YOU ARE FREE,

IN ONE MONTH YOU'LL ELECT YOUR PRESIDENT

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR ME!

CHORUS

IN ONE MONTH WE'LL ELECT OUR PRESIDENT

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE! WHOOPEE!

WHOOPEE! WHOOPEE! WHOOPEE!

Cast of MR. SMITH GOES TO OBSCURISTAN

Suddenly another Obscuristani man, RALIF NADIR, appears from behind the soldiers. He grabs MARCIE's mic and hurriedly addresses the crowd.

NADIR

PROFESSOR NADIR, THAT'S ME

OF THE FORMER UNIVERSITY.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SAY WHOOPEE

OBSCURISTAN A DEMOCRACY!

SO ON THIS DATE I HEREBY STATE

I TOO AM A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE!

The CHORUS of guards turn meNacingly toward NADIR.

CHORUS
(threateningly)

THAT FOOL IS REALLY TEMPTING FATE

TO SAY HE'S A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE!

NADIR

I AM RUNNING, I DO DECLARE,

IN THIS ELECTION BOTH FREE AND FAIR!

CHORUS

HE IS RUNNING, HE DOES DECLARE,

IN THIS ELECTION BOTH FREE AND FAIR?

REGURGITOV

HE'D BETTER START RUNNING RIGHT AWAY

IF HE HOPES TO LIVE TO SEE ANOTHER DAY

At a signal from REGURGITOV, the GOON grabs NADIR and starts dragging him away. The CHORUS cheerfully sings to cover up REGURITOV's televised embarrassment.

CHORUS

HE'S THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY,

HE'S THE LEADER OF THE STATE,

HE'S THE MAIN MAN OF THE COUNTRY,

HE'S A REAL POTENTATE -

ALL EXEUNT -- except for MARCIE., whose CELLPHONE rings. As she answers it, DIZ DELETABIT enters. DIZ is clearly in another place, and has a small backdrop behind him of a shower. He's wearing a towel and shower cap.

MARCIE
(into phone)
Yeah?

DIZ
(into his cellphone)
What the hell was that?

MARCIE
Diz, listen -- I was all ready to cover a staged event. I didn't know a real story was going to break out!

DIZ
It's your job to know! At the Selective News Network, we don't let the news run amok. That's what muckrakers are for. We don't rake the muck, we package it -- period!

MARCIE
I'm in the middle of nowhere. ... What difference does it make?

DIZ
Just keep this story running smoothly, Marcie -- or your next assignment will be a firsthand report from the Unemployment Line.

DIZ hangs up as he and MARCIE exit. After a moment NADIR warily re-enters. NADIR checks to make sure he is safe, then turns and address the audience.

NADIR
(to audience)
Well, it looks like I've got to go -- but you folks should stick around, as the San Francisco Mime Troupe proudly presents ... "Mr. Smith Goes to Obscuristan."

NADIR exits.

Amos Glick as RALIF NADIR

SCENE 2

THE OVAL OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON D.C. NIGHT

A portly middle-aged man in a suit, Vice President DICK CHENEY enters, talking on his cellphone.

CHENEY
(on phone)
News department? Get me Diz! ... Diz? Dick! Let's tone down that negative stuff on Obscuristan! ... Listen, I'm telling you to but the kibosh on it. That's an order!

CHENEY hangs up phone, looks around office.

CHENEY (cont'd)
Mr. President?

Not seeing President BUSH, CHENEY exits. After a moment GEORGE W. BUSH, who has been hiding under his DESK, pops up. BUSH is wearing pajamas, and eating a large pretzel. Before BUSH can take a bite - .

CHENEY (cont'd)
(off-stage)
Mr. President?

Startled BUSH drops the pretzel. He quickly hides under desk again, as CHENEY re-enters.CHENEY looks around, begins to leave again. But just as he reaches the door CHENEY sees something on the floor.

CHENEY (cont'd)
What's this?

He picks up the pretzel..

CHENCY (cont'd)
(mortified)
A pretzel!

CHENEY grabs his cellphone again.

CHENEY (cont'd)
Get me the Secret Service. I think we might have a "Code P" on our hands. ... Hurry! The President could be choking somewhere!

CHENEY hangs up, starts to leave. He hears a cough, and gets an idea. CHENEY crosses to the desk, knocks on it.

CHENEY (cont'd)
Mr. President?

No answer.

CHENEY (cont'd)
Mr. President?

BUSH
(sheepishly, from behind desk)
Yeah ...

CHENEY
Are you okay?

BUSH extends a hand, gives CHENEY the thumbs-up.

CHENEY (cont'd)
(to Bush)
Have you been eating pretzels again?

An indignant BUSH suddenly appears seated behind the desk.

BUSH
Certainly not, Dick! ... Now, what's on your mind?

CHENEY
I've just been alerted to the mess in Obscuristan.

BUSH
Er, Obs--

CHENEY
It's been running all day on SNN [-- that is, until I called Diz Deletabit, their top producer. Diz used to be my V.P. of P.R. at ScandalBurton Oil.

BUSH
Obscur--

CHENEY
"Obscuristan," Mr. President. Don't you remember the conversation we had last week? And the briefing we had yesterday? And that little show Rummy did for you last night using finger-puppets?
(exasperated:)
That little shithole where we're helping them set up a new form of government!

BUSH
Oh, yeah! We tried to have a coup down there, but we got caught. ...

CHENEY
No, sir, that was Venezuela.

BUSH
Um ... Is it that place with all those big-nosed people who read backwards and don't like Daddy's friends? ...

CHENEY
That's Israel, Mr. President. But you're getting closer. Obscuristan is in Central Asia ...

BUSH
... The middle of Asia! ...

CHENEY
And ever since our little military incursion into Afghanistan to capture Osama ...

BUSH
Dead or Alive!

CHENEY gives him a thumb's-up.

CHENEY
... Well, ever since then, instead of calming down over there, things have been heating up -- not just in Afghanistan itself, but in the neighboring "Stans" as well. ... And you know what <u>that</u> could lead to. ...

BUSH
Terrism!

CHENEY
Very close, Mr. President -- you were just one syllable off. ... So ... we need to encourage stability in the region. But every time we try to <u>export</u> democracy, we're accused of just wanting to <u>import</u> oil.

BUSH
<u>With</u> us or <u>against</u> us!

CHENEY
Yes, sir. ... And <u>that</u>, you may recall, is why we chose Obscuristan as the place to launch "Operation Enduring Image." To show the world that we'll even export democracy to a nation that appears to have nothing for us to plunder.

BUSH
Got it!

BUSH, satisfied with his grasp of the situation, begins to get back under his desk. CHENEY stops him.

CHENEY
The problem, Mr. President, is yesterday's P.R. disaster! If those elections are tainted by the stench of fraud, that certainly won't sit well with ... (frightened) you - know - who...

BUSH gasps in fear. A knock on the door, and both recoil in terror. The door opens and . Condoleezza Rice cheerfully, balletically, enters

CHENEY (cont'd)
(relieved)
Condi!

Song: "ACROSS THE SEA"

RICE

GENTLEMEN, I HAVE THE SOLUTION,

AND THIS TIME WE DON'T HAVE TO SHRED THE

CONSTITUTION!

IT'S ELEGANT, IT'S SIMPLE, DARE I SAY IT'S

PERFECTION -

WE'LL SEND SOMEONE TO OBSERVE

OBSCURISTAN'S ELECTION!

CHENEY
(speaking)
No good. If we send a guy like Jesse Jackson, he might actually observe stuff!

RICE

MR. VICE-PRESIDENT, I DO CONCUR,

BUT THE OBSERVER TO WHOM I REFER

IS A NINE-ONE-ONE HERO, ABOVE POLITICAL FRAY.

AND ONE WHO WILL SAY

WHAT WE WANT HIM TO SAY.

HE'S A FIREMAN, AND A REAL BOY SCOUT,

AND HE HASN'T A CLUE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

HE EVEN HAS A CLUB FOR LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS

THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS ... LET'S GIVE HIM A

WHIRL!

RICE (cont'd)
(speaking into INTERCOM)
Send in Mr. Smith, please.

CHENEY
I don't know. ...

A knock on the door.

CHENEY AND RICE

Come in.

JEFFERSON SMITH, Black, mid-thirties, in a firefighter's uniform, enters.

SMITH

Ms. Rice? Mr. Vice-President? ... *(in awe)* Mr. President!

BUSH

(trying to connect with a minority)

"Whassup?"

RICE

WELCOME, MR. SMITH, TO THESE HALLOWED

HALLS,

WE KNEW THAT YOU WOULD ANSWER WHEN YOUR

COUNTRY CALLS.

SMITH

I'm honored! The home of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt!

BUSH

And the Gipper! And my dad!

CHENEY

Mr. Smith, tell us about yourself. I understand you're quite the hero.

SMITH

I AM FIREFIGHTER JEFFERSON SMITH,

OF ENGINE COMPANY ONE-ONE-ZERO.

I'M JUST A REGULAR AMERICAN WHO DID HIS JOB

PLEASE DON'T CALL ME A HERO!

HEROES THERE WERE ON THAT TERRIBLE DAY,

THE ONES WHO RAN INTO THAT FIERY FRAY,

THE ONES WHO DID NOT WALK AWAY.

THEY'RE THE ONES WHO DESERVE

THE HONOR AND YOUR PRAISE.

CHENEY

Modest. I like that.

As SMITH was introducing himself BUSH finally had the opportunity to sneak a pretzel into his mouth. And now BUSH begins to choke. SMITH is the only person who sees the president choking..

SMITH
The President! He's choking!

SMITH grabs BUSH from behind, and hemlichs him -- dislodging the offending pretzel.

BUSH
Th-- Thank you! (to CHENEY) Is that guy a fireman or something?

CHENEY puts his arm around SMITH's shoulder.

RICE
How would you like to serve your country?

SMITH
Any way I can, ma'am!

CHENEY
We want to send you to ... Obscuristan.

SMITH
Obscuristan?

CHENEY, RICE & BUSH
Obscuristan!

CHENEY, RICE & BUSH (cont'd)

WE WISH TO SEND YOU, MR. SMITH,

ACROSS THE SEA,

TO A LAND WHERE THEY SPEAK

OBSCURISTANI!

IT'S A COUNTRY JUST EMERGING FROM

TYRANNY

AND THEY ARE LOOKING TO AMERICA, TO

YOU AND ME,

TO ENSURE THEIR FIRST ELECTIONS ARE

FAIR AND FREE!

SMITH
Gee, why not send former President Carter? That seems to be right up his--

RICE & CHENEY

OH POOR JIMMY,

HE ISN'T DOING WELL

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD

HE'S HANGING OUT WITH FIDEL?

SMITH

But I'm not a diplomat -- I'm just a fireman.

BUSH

MR. SMITH, JUST LIKE YOU, I'M A REGULAR GUY

I DON'T PONDER OR PHILOSOPHIZE,

AS AMERICANS WE KNOW WRONG FROM RIGHT,

AS AMERICANS WE KNOW BLACK FROM WHITE,

JUST GET IN THERE AND FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!

RICE

Actually Mr. Smith, you won't need to do any fighting. Our very able Ambassador Payne will tell you everything you need.

SMITH

(a moment of recognition)

Ambassador Penny Payne?!

RICE

The very same! In fact, she's delayed her return to private life so she could be in Obscuristan for the elections.

SMITH

Gosh! Well, then, of course, Mr. President, I'll do my duty.

BUSH, CHENEY & RICE

YOUR COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE,

SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY,

WE KNEW YOU WOULD BE DUTIFUL,

FOR AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL!

CHENEY and RICE sweep the thrilled MR. SMITH off the stage, as BUSH, with another pretzel, disappears behind his desk.

SCENE 3

AN AIRPORT IN OBSCURISTAN.

MOOSE, a 12-year-old Obscuristani boy, wearing the distressed, cast-off clothes of Americana, covered with logos of Nike, etc., is carrying a sign saying, "OBSCURISTAN WELCOMES MR. SMITH!!" Nearby looms the GOON.

MOOSE
(tauntingly)
The age of the goon is over!

The GOON barks at MOOSE, who cringes in fear. The GOON laughs, and exits.

MOOSE (cont'd)
(sheepishly)
Maybe not quite yet.

Unseen by MOOSE NADIR warily enters.

AbDULLAH
(off-stage)
Mustafa!

NADIR, startled by the sound, opens a convenient trapdoor in the floor and leaps down into it. Mullah ABDULLAH, a middle-aged, turbaned, bearded man, enters. He wears the traditional robes of his religion, but is clearly not wealthy.

ABDULLAH (cont'd)
There you are!

ABDULLAH grabs MOOSE's sign.

MOOSE
Uncle Abdullah!!

ABDULLAH
Have you finished collecting the dung for the evening fire? Have you finished milking the goat? Have you finished washing the dish?

MOOSE
But Uncle--

ABDULLAH
And yet you have time to make signs welcoming godless imperialists! What would your late father have said?

MOOSE
Maybe he would have said--

ABDULLAH
How dare you talk back! Is this how you show gratitude? Ever since your parents perished in Regurgitov's dungeons, I've raised you as my own.

MOOSE
Oh, I am hella-grateful to you, Uncle! I just need my space!

ABDULLAH
"Space"?

MOOSE
I can't waste my life chillin' in your fundamentalist crib!

ABDULLAH
(to the heavens)
Allah forgive me! I should never have let him go to that Internet café!
(to MOOSE)
It's turning you into ... an American!

MOOSE
That is so slightly not true! ... Besides, you go more than more than I do.

ABDULLAH
For business only!

An electronic "beep" is heard. ABDULLAH pulls out a cell phone and pushes a button.

AOL VOICE
You've got hate mail!

ABDULLah
I must go. But remember: As your legal guardian, I am ordering you to stay away from this American "Jeff Smith." Feh! ... Oh -- and on your way home, don't forget to pick up a six-pack of refreshing new "Pepsi Twist."

MULLAH ABDULLAH strides away.

MOOSE
(to himself)
You don't have to hate Americans to be a good Muslim...

MOOSE picks up his sign, and sits waiting for the plane to arrive.. MARCIE enters, talking agitatedly into her cellphone.

MARCIE
I told you, Diz, I cut it off as soon as I could. ...

Again, as if in another place, DIZ enters. This time he is wearing a suit, and behind him is a backdrop of the New York skyline. DIZ and MARCIE are both talking on their cellphones. DIZ is trying to hail a cab.

DIZ
Not soon enough, Marcie! I had Dick Cheney chewing my ear off from ... an Undisclosed Location.

MARCIE
Well, Diz, it is kind of suspicious to call a "democratic" election and then not allow any real opposition.

DIZ
That's the same thing you said in Florida! Taxi!

DIZ turns on his oily charm

DIZ (cont'd)
Look: I like you, Marcie. Handle this Smith thing smoothly, and who knows? Everything forgiven ... an assignment in Washington ...

MARCIE
(excited)
You think, Diz?

DIZ
Anything's possible. ... Maybe -- dare I say -- a high-profile talking head?

MARCIE
Wow!

DIZ
But Marcie, remember: Nothing but puff pieces! Oh -- and speaking of your profile: Think Botox. Taxi!

DIZ and MARCIE hang up as and his backdrop exit.

MARCIE
Scumball!

MARCIE turns to MOOSE.

MARCIE (cont'd)
Never go into broadcasting, kid.

MOOSE
Noted.

MOOSE suddenly points into the distance.

MOOSE (cont'd)
The plane!

AS MOOSE and MARCIE look at the plane a trapdoor pops open, NADIR comes out of it, crosses, opens a different trapdoor, disappears.

MOOSE (cont'd)
The plane! ... Mr. Smith has landed!

MARCIE speaks to "camera."

MARCIE
On me in 5 ... 4 ...

A blast of SNN theme music.

SNN ANNOUNCER
This... is SNN!

MARCIE smiles into the "camera."

MARCIE
Marcie Chang, live from Obscuristan ... just moments away from the arrival of Jeff Smith, the Special Election Observer -

MOOSE
(waving to camera)
Hello America!

MARCIE
And I think it's fair to say that at least one young Obscuristani couldn't be more thrilled!

MOOSE
He's here!

MOOSE crosses to where MR. SMITH will enter, only to be shoved aside by the Goon, who realizes he's on TV, and tries to cover his brutality with an awkward thumbs up to the camera.

To a flourish of patriotic American music, MR. SMITH enters -- dressed in a firefighter's outfit, complete with a big axe. He is followed by AMBASSADOR PAYNE

MARCIE
Well, Mr. Smith, you certainly seem ready for action.

SMITH
(embarrassed)
It was the Administration's idea. (looking at axe) Weird they didn't catch this at airport security. Though they did confiscate my nail-clipper.

MARCIE
Mr. Smith, how does it feel to be a Special Election Observer?

Song: "I'M GLAD TO BE HERE"

SMITH
(to camera)

I'M GLAD TO BE HERE, TO DO MY PART,

AND GET YOU ELECTION

OFF TO A REAL GOOD START.

EVERY VOTE IS EQUAL,

WE HOLD THAT TO BE SELF-EVIDENT,

EVERY NATION HAS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

THE LEADERS OF ITS GOVERNMENT.

LET GOOD PEOPLE RUN,

THEN MAKE YOUR SELECTION.

COUNT EVERY VOTE FAIRLY,

AND YOU'VE GOT A FREE ELECTION!

AND YOU WANT TO ELECT PEOPLE

WHO REALLY KNOW -

LIBERTY AND LIFE FROM A PUNCH IN THE NOSE!

I'M GLAD TO BE HERE, TO DO MY PART,

AND SHOW THAT AMERICA'S GOT A LOT OF HEART.

AND WHAT DOES AMERICA WANT

ALL AROUND THE WORLD?

FREEDOM FOR EVERY MAN, WOMAN, BOY,

AND GIRL.

SMITH taps MOOSE on the chin, one of those "aw, shucks" soft punches.

ALL

FREEDOM FOR EVERYMAN, WOMAN, BOY,

AND GIRL.

PAYNE
As Americans, we want to do all we can to help bring democracy to Obscuristan. On September 11th Mr. Smith was in New York to open a new branch of the Junior Firefighters Brigade. And when I turned on my hotel television that fateful morning ... to SNN, I'm sure ... he saw one of his brother firefighters pinned under a half-ton of rubble, with nothing to protect him but a tattered American Flag –

SMITH
(confused)
Flag?

Velina Brown as PAYNE, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as MARCIE,
Michael Gene Sullivan as SMITH, Michael Carreiro as GOON, Victor Toman as MOOSE

PAYNE
He had a job to do: He saved that firefighter, and that flag!. ... Now many might ask, "What's so important about the American Flag?"

MOOSE, GOON, and MARCIE raises their hands PAYNE calls on GOON, who steps up to the mic..

GOON
It stands for Democracy... and stuff!

PAYNE
But democracy can be fragile! Like a Fabergé egg en route from Sotheby's, it must be protected! And who better than Mr. Smith here to be the bubblewrap around our delicate democracy as we deliver it to our needy friends in obscuristan?

SMITH
Well, I certainly hope--

PAYNE
I'm sorry, His Excellency is expecting us.

PAYNE begins to pull MR. SMITH away

MARCIE
Thank you, Madame Ambassador. A great day in Obscuristan! This has been Marcie Chan, live from Obscuristan -

Suddenly RALIF NADIR, emerges from his trapdoor.

NADIR
(to camera)
Wait!

NADIR grab mic from MARCIE

NADIR (cont'd)
(to camera)
I am Professor Nadir!

GOON tries to pulls out sack, tries to put it over NADIR's head, but NADIR ducks.

PAYNE
(to MARCIE)
Turn off those cameras!

NADIR
(to camera)
The Obscuristani election has been fixed! Regurgitov is--

MARCIE
(panicked)
Cut! Cut!

The GOON succeeds in putting sack over NADIR. MARCIE grabs the mic back.

NADIR
Help!

SMITH
Let that man go!

The GOON turns threateningly to SMITH.

GOON
Minding your business, you should be!

GOON forces NADIR (with sack over head) out. MR SMITH tries to follow, but is cut off by PAYNE.

PAYNE
Be careful, Jeff. It's for his own good!

SMITH
Who is he?

PAYNE
You wait here. I'll be back!

PAYNE exits after GOON. SMITH tries to follow, but is cut off by MOOSE.

MOOSE
Mr. Smith, I'm so juiced that you're here!

SMITH
(distracted)
Hi kid -

SMITH is caught shaking MOOSE's hand as MARCIE's cell phone is ringing. She answers.

MARCIE
Hi, Diz -

From offstage NADIR'S scream is heard. SMITH turns to investigate, but PAYNE pops in to block his path.

PAYNE
I said wait here, Jeff!

PAYNE exits, again.

MOOSE
I just love Junior Firefighters.com!

SMITH pulls up short.

SMITH
You've seen the website?

MOOSE
I don't mean to disrespect my uncle, who has taken on the tremendous burden of caring for me, on top of his many duties as a fundamentalist extremist -- but your Junior Firefighter Brigade is hecka cool!

SMITH turns to MOOSE..

SMITH
What's your name, young fella?

MOOSE
Mustafa, sir. But you can call me "Moose."

SMITH
Well, "Moose" –

SMITH takes off his fireman's hat and puts it on MOOSE'S head -- a gesture that makes the boy almost swoon with joy.

SMITH (cont'd)
– how would you like to be inducted into the Junior Firefighters Brigade?

The musical fanfare of the Junior Firefighter Brigade is heard.

MOOSE
Really?

SMITH and MOOSE raise their hands to recite the pledge.

SMITH AND MOOSE
"I hereby promise to do my duty, prevent fires, and help others -- especially those in need."

MOOSE
Gosh, Mr. Smith!

SMITH
Now run along, little fella.

SMITH playful gives MOOSE another "aw, shucks" punch on the chin. MOOSE, thrilled, starts to exit.

MOOSE
See ya at the next fire!

MOOSE exits. MARCIE hangs up phone.

MARCIE
I must be genetically incapable of doing a puff piece! (to SMITH) At least you stuck to the script!

MARCIE starts to leave.

MARCIE (cont'd)
And the kid's a great touch. You even had me going for a second there.

SMITH
Excuse me, Ms. Chang -

MARCIE exits -- but before SMITH can follow her, PAYNE enters.

PAYNE
Well, that's all taken care of. Right this way, Jeff ... our limousine is waiting.

SMITH, confused, exits with Payne.

NADIR, with a sack over his head, runs onto the stage, chased by the GOON. NADIR escapes down the sewer.

SCENE 4

PAYNE'S OFFICE AT THE U.S. EMBASSY.

In the next room, a DINNER PARTY has been going on for several hours. We hear the sounds of a cheesy Obscuristani band playing American cover tunes. REGURGITOV can be heard sining "Celebrate."

SMITH and PAYNE enter. PAYNE is enjoying herself, dancing to the music, but SMITH is afire with innocent zeal.

SMITH
So when do I get started? I want to inspect the voting booths ... proofread the ballots ...

PAYNE
Whoa, Jeff. You just got here -- and this party is in your honor. Relax... mingle!

SMITH
But I want to mingle with the average Joe Obscuristani on the street. I've got a ton of questions -- like: Who was that guy at the airport, Ralif Nadir?

PAYNE is shaken out her revery by his question. She is suddenly serious.

PAYNE
Ralif Nadir! A dreamer... a visionary... a friend. Many a night, he would sit in that very chair (she indicates chair) and we'd dream of a free, democratic Obscuristan. It's tragic ... how a fine mind can just ... snap.

SMITH
You mean he's...

PAYNE
Yes. Bonkers. The struggle for freedom simply proved too much.

SMITH
But... why did that goon at the airport throw a bag over his head?

PAYNE
(thinking quickly)
Treatment, Jeff! The bag over the head is a traditional form of therapy in Obscuristan. His mind was undone by the pressures of fighting the enemies of democracy. Enemies like ... Mullah Abdullah!

SMITH
Who?

PAYNE
A fundamentalist extremist who has vowed to kill both Nadir and Regurgitov. Mullah Abdullah would love nothing better than to drag this country back to the Eighth Century!

SMITH now has a huge, cheerfully excited grin on his face.

SMITH

Wow!

PAYNE

(confused by his cheerfulness)

Um ... Jeff? Is something ... on your mind?

SMITH

Oh -- sorry, Ms. Payne. I was just thinking: Wow! Here you go again!

PAYNE

I'm not following you...

SMITH

You know, just as you've always done! Oh, I know all about you, Ambassador!

Dramatic chord.

PAYNE

(worried)

You do...?

SMITH

Yeah! A crusading young civil rights prosecutor, defending the Republic against the enemies of freedom!

PAYNE

(relieved)

Yes, well -

SMITH

Like the time you helped put away that clinic bomber in New York -

PAYNE

(caught up in the memories)

Those were the days...

SMITH

Yeah! And putting away those dirty cops in Philadelphia -

PAYNE

That was a tough case!

SMITH

Even prosecuting the skinheads who set the fire that killed ... my mom and dad!

PAYNE

(stunned)

Jackie and Joe Smith?

SMITH
You probably don't remember me, I was just a kid. But as a kid, For years every night I would relived that fire in my mind. But in my dream I didn't let my dad push me to safety. No. I would I follow him when he went in into our house to rescue my mom ... and I pulled them both out of there!

PAYNE
A lot of us had dreams back then, Jeff. ...

SMITH
The day you won that case, gosh, that was my proudest day as an American. It proved to me that the system can work.

PAYNE
That was the last case I won. Oh, Jeff...Jeff, there's something I must tell you -

REGURGITOV -- drunk, disheveled, swigging from a bottle of Absolut, -- staggers singing into the room.

REGURGITOV
(singing)
"Celebrate good times, come on!)

REGURGITOV sees SMITH and PAYNE

REGURGITOV (cont'd)
Ah! My American friends! Do you want to know something ironic? When we were part of the Soviet Union, I always wanted to leave the Party. Now, I never do!
But God, I miss that Yakov Smirnoff!

SMITH
Excuse me, Your Excellency -

REGURGITOV gives SMITH a big, boozy hug.

REGURGITOV
"Excellency"! I love the sound of that!

SMITH
I have a couple of questions about the election -

PAYNE tries to pull REGURGITOV away from SMITH's questions

PAYNE
I think Your Excellency should rest! You look a bit peaked!

REGURGITOV
Are you kidding? My booty has only just now begun to shake!

REGURGITOV aggressively bumps PAYNE, then turns to SMITH.

REGURGITOV (cont'd)
What is your question, "dude."

SMITH
Actually, I was wondering.... well, sir ...

REGURGITOV
(prompting)
Eh ...

SMITH
Eh?

REGURGITOV
Ehhhh...

SMITH
Ehhhh?

REGURGITOV
Ehhhhh...

SMITH
Eeehhh...excellency?

REGURGITOV
(delighted)
Excellency!

REGURGITOV giggles with enjoyment.

SMITH
Well, Your Excellency, I was wondering: When do I get to meet your opponent?

REGURGITOV
My what?! Oh! A comedian!

REGURGITOV again enfolds the two in a boozy embrace.

REGURGITOV (cont'd)
I love you guys. You guys are beautiful! America is beautiful! Except for certain parts of Cleveland.

PAYNE
(to REGURGITOV)
Could Your Excellency excuse us for a moment?

REGURGITOV
And excellent suggestion! In fact, I was thinking of passing out now anyhow.

REGURGITOV passes out, caught by SMITH.

PAYNE
(to SMITH)
He is a bit rough around the edges -- but h, make no mistake: Without Regurgitov Obscuristan would become a world-class terrorist base so fast it would make your head spin.

SMITH
You really think so?

PAYNE
I'm sure of it. And we don't want every day to become another 9/11.

SMITH
Gosh, no. But this all so confusing! What can an Election Observer like me do?

PAYNE thinks for a moment, trying to think of something to distract SMITH from actually observing the election. Then –

PAYNE
Jeff -- don't you have a club for boys and girls back in the States?

SMITH
The Junior Firefighters!

PAYNE
I've got an idea! Maybe you could set up a chapter here…

SMITH
Hey, that's a great idea! We could go around making sure all the voting places are fireproof! I've already got one member.

PAYNE
(smiling)
You'll give those kids a crash course in Democracy 101.

SMITH
Yeah! ... You're the best, Ambassador Payne!

SMITH grabs the passed-out REGURGITOV's hand, shaking him awake.

SMITH (cont'd)
This is gonna be swell!

SMITH exits. REGURGITOV rises to his feet.

PAYNE
Ah, he reminds me of me at that age. ...

REGURGITOV
Penny? Getting a little soft ...?

PAYNE
You just take care of Nadir.

REGURGITOV
We found his safe house. In a little while, it won't be so safe...

PAYNE
And don't worry -- I'll keep Smith on a short leash.

REGURGITOV
And Penny, later this evening, perhaps you could put me on a short leash?

Getting no response to his obsequious flirtation REGURGITOV crosses away.

PAYNE
You're an evil little man, aren't you, Gurgie?

REGURGITOV
Yes, I am. I've been very bad.

REGURGITOV playfully jumps up on the chair and squats. PAYNE takes the cue.

PAYNE
Say it!

REGURGITOV
(obsequiously)
No! I can't!

PAYNE
Down! ... Say it!

REGURGITOV
No... no!

REGURGITOV gets off the chair, but leaves his hands on it. PAYNE steps on his fingers. She grinds it with her boot, to the masochistic delight of REGURGITOV.

REGURGITOV (cont'd)
Down with Regurgitov. Long live free Obscuristan.!

PAYNE
Louder!

PAYNE crunches on his hand harder.

REGURGITOV
Down with Regurgitov! Long live free Obscuristan!

Satisfied with REGURGITOV's humiliation PAYNE removes her foot from his fingers, releasing him

PAYNE
Good. Now go and prepare.

REGURGITOV

Yes, Mommy.

REGURGITOV, excited in anticipation of even more pain, crawls off-stage. PAYNE is, triumphant over REGURGITOV, but tormented by what she's become - compared to SMITH's heroic vision of her.

Song: "THE AVENGER OF THE POOR"

PAYNE

I'VE MADE A LOT OF COMPROMISES

TO GET TO WHERE I AM.

I'VE PLAYED MY PART IN GREAT EVENTS WITH

THE MOST POWERFUL OF MEN.

I'VE BETRAYED MY OWN IDEALS,

AND IT LEAVES ME FEELING STRESSED...

SO TO EXORCISE THE DEMONS

THAT I KNOW MUST BE EXPRESSED -

I BECOME THE AVENGER

OF THE POOR AND OPPRESSED!

I'VE PUNISHED CEO'S AND POLITICOS,

INVESTMENT BANKERS, AND MILITARY WANKERS,

THE ROBBER BARON, THE WHITE-COLLAR THIEF,

AND THE OCCASIONAL RABBI, MULLAH AND

PRIEST.

ATTORNEYS GENERAL AND DIPLOMATS

REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT,

AS LONG AS THE CAT IS FAT!

I LIKE TO GIVE THEM A PINCH, GIVE THEM A SLAP I

I LOVE TO HEAR THE PADDLE WHAP!

I ADORE THE QUIVERING OF THE LIP,

AS THEY FEEL THE STING OF MY AVENGING WHIP...

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE CLIMBING UP THE LADDER,

BUT THE HIGHER I GO, I ONLY GET MADDER

FOR I'VE GONE FROM BEING GOOD

TO BEING BAD, TO BEING BADDER

AND SO TO ASSUAGE THE PAIN I FEEL

I USE THE CANE TO MAKE THEM KNEEL

FOR WHEN THE POWERFUL FEEL BAD,

I FEEL GLADDER!

I LIKE TO GIVE THEM A PINCH, GIVE THEM A SLAP I

LOVE TO HEAR THE PADDLE WHAP!

I ADORE THE QUIVERING OF THE LIP

AS THEY FEEL THE STING OF MY AVENGING WHIP!

I LIKE TO GIVE THEM A PINCH, GIVE THEM A SLAP I

LOVE TO HEAR THE PADDLE WHAP!

I ADORE THE QUIVERING OF THE LIP!

AS THEY FEEL THE STING OF MY -

AS THEY FEEL THE STING OF MY -

AS THEY FEEL THE STING OF MY

AVENGING WHIP!

PAYNE exits.

SMITH comes excitedly running back in, wearing his fireman's outfit (except for the hat).

SMITH

Ambassador Payne? I'm ready to get started!

A loud explosion is heard from off-stage.

SMITH(cont'd)

An explosion!

Smith reaches offstage, grabs a coils of rope.

SMITH(cont'd)

Someone might be hurt!

SMITH rushes off toward the explosion.

SCENE 5

A STREET IN OBSCURISTAN

There is ruble and charred stones, and a gaping hole in the ground. SMITH runs down the street, sees burning rubble, runs to inspect the hole. MOOSE, still wearing SMITH's fireman's hat, and every excited to help, arrives.

MOOSE
Junior Firefighter Mustafa reporting for duty!

SMITH
Moose! What are you doing here?

MOOSE
First Rule of the Junior Firefighters -

SMITH and MOOSE raise their hands Junior Fire Fighter Salute.

MOOSE
"Where there's smoke, there's fire."

Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

SMITH
Attaboy!

SMITH playfully chucks him on the chin. They hear a groan from the hole.

SMITH
Here, hold this!

SMITH hands MOOSE one end of the rope, and throws the other end down the trap. SMITH climbs down.

MOOSE
(to the victim in the hole)
Please don't try to move, sir.! Junior Firefighters Rule Number 2:

MOOSE does J.F.F. salute – Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

MOOSE (cont'd)
"Advise victim of proper safety procedures."

MOOSE sees NADIR trying to climb out of hole.

MOOSE (cont'd)
(to NADIR)
Give me your hand!

MOOSE and SMITH lifts NADIR, wounded, out of the hole. After a moment, when all are recovered –

MOOSE and SMITH do triumphant J.F.F. salute – Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

SMITH
We've got to get him to a hospital! He might be in shock.

SMITH holds one hand up.

SMITH(cont'd)
(to NADIR)
Sir - how many fingers?

NADIR
Total? Five. Though technically, your thumb is not "finger." So: four.

MOOSE
Do you know where you are?

NADIR
Yes.

SMITH
Wait a minute... you were at the airport! You're -

NADIR
Professor Ralif Nadir.

SMITH
Ralif Nadir?

MOOSE
Mr. Smith! Junior Firefighters Rule Number 3:

MOOSE AND SMITH do J.F.F. salute – Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

MOOSE (cont'd)
"Go Get Help."

SMITH puts a hand on MOOSE's shoulder.

SMITH
Moose, go get help.

MOOSE goes to get help as SMITH helps Nadir steady himself.

SMITH(cont'd)
(to NADIR)
Come on, Professor, we'll protect you from the fundamentalist terrorists!

NADIR
Are they trying to kill me, too?

SMITH
Who else could it be?

NADIR
Regurgitov, of course!

SMITH
(dismissively)
But... why would "His Excellency" want to kill you?

NADIR
To keep power from the Obscuristani People! *(dramatically heroic)* For so long we have dreamed of our freedom. The beautiful, barren hills of Obscuristan are soaked with the blood of our freedom fighters...warlords, Soviets, more warlords... and now, that freedom is finally within our grasp, Regurgitov declares anyone who opposes him a terrorist! Or... insane!

SMITH
(innocently)
You mean the elections are fixed?

NADIR
Only an American would confuse a fixed election with a real one!

NADIR starts to go back to his hole. SMITH tries to continue the conversation, but before he can MOOSE re-enters.

MOOSE
I got help! ... Rule Number 4 of the Junior Firefighters:

MOOSE AND SMITH do J.F.F. salute – Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

MOOSE (cont'd)
"Promptly update supervisor on your progress."

SMITH
Attaboy, Moose!

MARCIE enters on cellphone.

MARCIE
Diz! Thanks for getting back to me! (to SMITH, MUSTAFA, and NADIR) Everybody okay?

SMITH, MOOSE, and NADIR nod.

MARCIE (cont'd)
Good! (on phone) Okay, this is how I see it -- tight on me. Then pan to the house. Then pull back so we can see the smoke ... what do you think?

Seeing MARCIE gives NADIR an idea.

NADIR
I must get my message out to the world!

Before NADIR *reaches* MARCIE he is grabbed by SMITH.

SMITH
That's a great idea, Professor! Moose, take the Professor and clean him up!

MOOSE takes NADIR off.

MARCIE
(on cellphone)
I've got the puff piece to end all puff pieces! Heroic American Fireman Saves Unknown Obscuristani.

SMITH
(humbly)
Aw, ma'am - I was just doing my job.

MARCIE
(on cellphone)
Thanks, Diz!

MARCIE hangs up phone, pulls out microphone.

MARCIE (cont'd)
(to unseen crew)
We're on in five, four, three, two –

The set changes around MARCIE and SMITH to the Oval Office, in the White House.

A blast of SNN theme music.

SNN ANNOUNCER
This... is SNN!

SCENE 5 / THE OVAL OFFICE

On the wall is a television dropflap. During the set change it is opened, revealing MARCIE and SMITH. They are on TV.

MARCIE
(into "camera")
Marcie Chang here, live in Obscuristan, where America's presence is already paying dividends -- human dividends. Just moments ago Jefferson Smith showed once again why he's a true American hero.

BUSH enters the Oval Office, wearing his pajamas.

SMITH
Thank you, Ms. Chang. It's my job to help the Obscuristanis achieve democracy any way I can.

BUSH
(to TV)
You tell 'em, Fireboy!

BUSH begins searching for tv remote.

SMITH
And that is why it is my privilege to extened the full protection of the United States to Professor Ralif Nadir!

MARCIE
Wow!

SMITH
Professor Nadir has raised some serious questions about the elections here in Obscuristan –

BUSH changes the channel.

TV ANNOUNCER
(off-stage)
Tonight on Celebrity Boxing!

BUSH
Now we're talkin'!

TV ANNOUNCER
In the black trunks, former Secretary of State Hank "The Tank" Kissinger!

On the "television" a small, grey-haired hand puppet appears!

BUSH
Come on, Hank! Do like ya did in Cambodia!

TV ANNOUNCER
And in the red trunks, from MIT, Professor Emeritus Noam "The Bombsky" Chomsky!

On the television, a small, bespectacled hand puppet bounces on.

BUSH

Booooo!

TV ANNOUNCER

And now ... let's get ready to ru-u-u-u-umble!

BUSH is thrilled, but suddenly a loud, chilling voice is heard from off-stage.

BARBARA

(offstage)

George!!!

BUSH hits the intercom.

BUSH

Who is it?

SECRETARY

(over intercom)

It's You-Know-Who, Mr. President.

BUSH

Uh-oh ...

BUSH staggers about in terror, finally deciding to sneak out the way he came. But before he can escape the door opens, and BARBARA BUSH enters, furious. BARBARA is a stout, formidable, conservatively dressed white haired matriarch.

BUSH (cont'd)

Mom!

BARBARA

George. Walker. Bush!

BUSH

What brings you to these parts? Hey, you wanna watch Celebrity Boxing? Hank's gettin' his butt kicked by some pencil-neck.

BARBARA closes the television dropflap.

BARBARA

Oil!

BUSH

(looking)

Where?

BARBARA

In Obscuristan! Oil!

BUSH
There's no oil there. Dick told me.

BARBARA
(as if to a child)
Why else would we be there?

BUSH
(proudly thinking he has the right answer)
We're there to export democracy –

BARBARA
My oldest son...

BARBARA slaps BUSH across the stage..

BARBARA (cont'd)
(referring to audience)
That's the crap we feed these idiots! You're even dumber than your Dad.

BUSH
Nobody ever tells me anything!

BARBARA tries to soothe BUSH, telling him the plan as if it were a bedtime story.

BARBARA
We didn't want to tell anyone except our friends at Scandalburton to know about the oil until we had silenced any opposition, had the election, and our puppet Regurgitov was securely in power.

BUSH
Power...

BARBARA
Then we could pump that stupid little country dry of oil...

BUSH
Oil...

BUSH is now gently resting his head on his mother's bosom.

BUSH (cont'd)
So, uh, what's the problem?

BARBARA
The problem is: -

BARBARA bounces BUSH's head off her boobs.

BARBARA (cont'd)
That idiot Jeff Smith is mucking things up!

BUSH

(desperate to please his mother, and avoid more punishment)

Dead or alive? With us or against us? Axis of Evil?

BARBARA slaps BUSH across the stage..

BARBARA

Never send a member of the working class to do an aristocrat's job! Nadir has to go.

BARBARA starts to exit.

BUSH

Won't people accuse us of hip-hop-cracy?

BARBARA stops, astounded at here son's stupidity., Smiling, and on the other side of the stage, BARBARA throws a slap out into the distance, like a boomerang. BUSH watches it circle, and after a pause, it hits him. BUSH begins to cry. Finally feeling either compassion or out of a desire to have BUSH leave BARBARA reach into her pocket and holds out a treat.

BUSH (cont'd)

Oh! Pretzel!

BUSH takes the pretzel, happily exits. BARBARA pulls out her cellphone.

BARBARA

(into phone)

Get me Ambassador Payne!

BARBARA exits.

SCENE 5 / BACK ON A STREET IN OBSCURISTAN

MARCIE is still on the phone. SMITH is all smiles.

MARCIE
(into phone)
But, Diz! Diz! Oh my god! You sleezeball!

MARCIE angrily hangs up.

SMITH
That was great! Marcie – I'm sorry – Ms. Chang, you're swell!

MARCIE
Great? Swell? I just got fired!

SMITH
Fired? Why?

MARCIE
For reporting the news!

SMITH
What could be wrong with telling the world about all the good America's doing here in Obscuristan?

MARCIE
Puff pieces! Why can't I just do puff pieces!

MARCIE starts to leave, pauses.

MARCIE (cont'd)
Oh, and Fireman Jeff –

SMITH
Yes?

MARCIE
I'd keep my head down if I were you...

MARCIE exits.

SMITH
Wait, Ms. Chang –

NADIR enters.

NADIR
I am ready to go on the air. Where is Ms. Chang.

SMITH
Um... plenty of time for that later, Professor! Right now we have to get you to the Embassy– and safety!

NADIR is clearly not thrilled at the thought.

NADIR

Oh, great.

SMITH guides NADIR out.

SCENE 6

PAYNE'S OFFICE AT THE U.S. EMBASSY.

PAYNE enters, talking on her cellphone.

PAYNE
(on phone)
Yes ... He just called ... He said he was bringing him ...

SMITH enters, with NADIR.

SMITH
Right this way, Professor! Ambassador Payne, I have an old friend of yours here!

PAYNE
They just walked in...

PAYNE hangs up The tension is thick and dramatic between PAYNE and NADIR..

PAYNE (cont'd)
Ralif...

NADIR
Penny...

PAYNE
So... we meet again. How have you been?

NADIR
I'm not dead. Yet...

SMITH is innocently misinterpreting their conversation.

SMITH
This is swell -- two old friends!

NADIR
Mr. Smith, I really think I should go –

SMITH
Why, that's silly! You couldn't be in a safer place.

REGURGITOV enters, with two GOONS.

REGURGITOV
Ralif.

NADIR
Regurgitov.

REGURGITOV
So... we meet again. Always surprising to see you. Alive (to GOON) Take him!

The GOON grabs Nadir and starts to wrestle him away.

SMITH

What?!

NADIR

Thank you for your assistance (suddenly very threatening) Mr. Smith. Penny...I'm about to be very bad...

REGURGITOV exits, as GOON drags NADIR out.

SMITH
(to PAYNE)

We've got to stop them!

SMITH goes to follow REGURGITOV, but PAYNE holds him back.

PAYNE
(calmly)

Sit down, Jeff...

SMITH sits.

SMITH

You don't understand! Nadir thinks someone in Regurgitov is going to kill him!

PAYNE

I told you - Nadir is insane...

SMITH

But that's just it, ma'am - he doesn't seem crazy! Ad far as I can tell everything he said is true - there is no opposition candidate. And –

SMAITH stands up.

SMITH (cont'd)

Someone is trying to kill him!

PAYNE
(calmly)

Sit down, Jeff...

SMITH sits.

SMITH

Something fishy is going on here, ma'am... maybe we should get Nadir back until we know what's going on -

PAYNE

I know exactly what's going on.

SMITH stands.

SMITH

You do?

PAYNE

Jeff – sit...

SMITH sits.

PAYNE (cont'd)

It's a big, grown-up world, Jeff -- not like your Junior Firefighters. Sometimes things here are more complicated than they seem. ... sometimes compromise is required...

SMITH

Compromise..?

PAYNE

Obscuristan needs an unquestioned leader like Regurgitov before American investment can flood this country.

SMITH

Why? I thought Obscuristan didn't have anything.

PAYNE

Well, that's not completely true. Turns out they do have a little oil. Who knew? But just think of all the good a corporation.... like Scandalburton... could do here! Schools... hospitals... malls...

SMITH

What about fair elections? And free speech?

PAYNE

What's more important, Jeff? Free speech, or food for children?

SMITH

Gosh...can't they have both?

PAYNE

(shaking her head)

Have you ever seen what happens when you give free speech to well-fed children? It's not pretty. ... No, Jeff: Baby steps. That's the way to democracy.

SMITH

What about Professor Nadir?

PAYNE

He'll receive a fair trail. And then be executed as a terrorist.

SMITH looks at PAYNE, his hero, in disbelief.

SMITH

I can't believe you're apart of this, Ambassador...

PAYNE
I'm sorry if I disappoint you, Jeff. I'm sure that one day you'll realize this was the only way... Once this is over, I'm joining the board of ScandalBurton Oil. You could come with me! Think of all the good you could do for your Junior Firefighters with a six-figure salary. Oh Jeff - help me help you help yourself help the children!

SMITH is drawn to the idea of helping the children.

PAYNE (cont'd)
Think about it...

PAYNE exits. SMITH considers her proposition, tries to tap into his optimism.

SMITH
(sings)

EVERY VOTE IS EQUAL,

WE HOLD THAT TO BE SELF-EVIDENT,

EVERY NATION HAS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

THE LEADERS OF ITS GOVERNMENT.

LET GOOD PEOPLE RUN,

THEN MAKE YOUR SELECTION.

COUNT EVERY VOTE FAIRLY,

AND YOU'VE GOT A…

SMITH starts to see the truth of his situation. Despondent, SMITH strips off his firefighters' coat, exits.

SCENE 7

THE OBSCURISTAN AIRPORT

MARCIE enters, with suitcase. She pulls out a whiskey flask, takes a swig. After a moment SMITH enters, also with suitcase. Both are prepared to leave Obscuristan..

MARCIE
Well, if it isn't Fireman Jeff.

SMITH
What are you doing here?

MARCIE
No point in hanging around without a job, so I'm flying to the land of the free.

SMITH
Not me -- I'm going home to Fresno.

MOOSE runs in, carrying the firefighters' helmet SMITH gave him earlier. MOOSE points an accusing finger at SMITH..

MOOSE
You turned him in!

SMITH
Moose!

MOOSE
It's all over the internet -- how you caught this big "terrorist"! My Uncle is right -- you Americans are hypocrites!

SMITH
No, Moose – it's not true!

MOOSE
You violated Junior Firefighters Rule No. 5...

SMITH
(sadly)
"Never betray a friend."

MOOSE
And now you're flying back home after accomplishing your evil deeds? Well... I quit your Junior Firefighters!

MOOSE throws the firefighters' helmet at SMITH.

MOOSE (cont'd)
(brokenhearted)
They are a lie! And you... are a phoney! I must go now and apologize profusely to my Uncle.

MOOSE runs out.

SMITH

No, Moose... Moose!

SMITH takes a few steps after MOOSE, then stops.

MARCIE

Why don't you run after him?

SMITH

(ruefully)

And what? Tell him... I didn't know what I was doing?

SMITH sits dejectedly on his suitcase, defeated.

Song: "THE RANKS OF THE ALIENATED"

MARCIE

YOU DIDN'T KNOW THEN BUT NOW YOU DO,

AND YOU NOW KNOW MORE

THAN YOU WANTED TO.

DISBELIEF BEGINS TO GROW,

AS REALITY TURNS INTO A PUPPET SHOW.

YOU'LL NOW LOOK AT THE FLAG

WITH A JADED EYE,

KNOWING THOSE WHO WAVE IT HIGHEST

OFTEN LIE.

IT'S HARD TO KEEP YOUR FEET AS

THE EARTH SHIFTS UNDERNEATH,

AND YOUR COMFORTING ASSUMPTIONS

SAY GOODBYE!

WELCOME TO THE RANKS OF THE ALIENATED –

THOSE WHO FIND IT HARD TO CHEER ON CUE!

THOSE WHO HEAR THE PIOUS PREACH,

AND HEAR THE POLITICIANS SPEECH

AND WONDER WHO IT IS WHO'S GETTING SCREWED.

SO KNOW YOU KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING

DON'T YOU, MISTER JONES...

SMITH's positive attitude has been crushed, and he joins MARCIE in accepting her pessimism.

MARCIE AND SMITH

WELCOME TO THE RANKS OF THE ALIENATED –

THOSE WHO FIND IT HARD TO CHEER ON CUE!

THOSE WHO HEAR THE PIOUS PREACH,

AND HEAR THE POLITICIANS SPEECH,

AND WONDER WHO IT IS WHO'S GETTING SCREWED!

MARCIE

THERE'S REALLY NOTHING WE CAN DO...

SO HAVE A NICE TRIP BACK HOME.

MARCIE takes another swig as she and and SMITH gather their luggage and begin to exit. But suddenly SMITH stops, turns around.

SMITH

No... no! I can't just go home like this! I came here to do a job, and... gosh darn it! I'm gonna do it!

SMITH defiantly puts down his suitcase, as the Junior Firefighters' theme plays!

MARCIE

You're dreamin', Jeff!

SMITH

Oh, come on, Marcie! We can't let Moose - and all the little Mooses around the world grow up thinking that Americans are crooked, or that Democracy is a

buncha hooey! We gotta show 'em that ordinary Americans don't want to strong-arm little countries like Obscuristan!

MARCIE
And how are we gonna do that?

SMITH thinks hard... and finally, grinning with enthusiasm –

SMITH
Marcie! What if I promised yo the biggest, juiciest live feed you ever had?

MARCIE
Sounds great! But you forget – I'm an ex-reporter.

MARCIE goes to leave.

SMITH
Well, you gotta get that job back before election day!

MARCIE
And when I break this juicy story... what then?

SMITH
What are they going to do, fire you? You don't have a job now!

MARCIE
You're dreaming –

MARCIE steps away, stops... then steps back.

MARCIE (cont'd)
But I like it! What's your plan?

SMITH
It's a fifty foot jump into a bucket of water... but it just might work! You – get your job back. I gotta get into Regurgitov's palace.

SMITH and MARCIE both pull out cellphones phones and dial. Sound of cellphones ringing, as on a different pat of the stage DIZ enters. DIZ is skiing, and behind him walks on a flat of an alpine mountain. Simultaneously, on another part of the stage PAYNE enters. Behind her walks on a flat of party guests at a reception at the palace. PAYNE and DIZ both pull out phones, answer. All are on phones.

DIZ
Yello?

PAYNE
Hello?

MARCIE
Diz, it's Marcie ...

SMITH

Ambassador Payne?

DIZ

Jeez, Marcie, what part of "You're fired" don't you understand?

PAYNE

Jeff, where are you?

SMITH

I've been thinking about your offer –

MARCIE

One more puff piece –

DIZ

Hold on!

(DIZ skis dazzlingly around an obstacle.)

What?

MARCIE & SMITH

I wanna go back to work!

DIZ

You're not going to beg, are you?

PAYNE

Wonderful!

DIZ

I hate it when they beg! Don't beg, it's beneath you.

MARCIE

I'm begging you.

DIZ

(very pleased)

Ah!

SMITH

If I really want to help Obscuristan, I have to look at the big picture.

DIZ

And if I give you this chance, what's in it for me?

MARCIE

Whatever you want.

SMITH

I'll even testify against Nadir.

DIZ AND PAYNE

I'm glad to hear you've finally come around.

PAYNE
Head on back to the Embassy -- we'll talk.

DIZ
I'll call you from the chalet. Ciao!

DIZ and PAYNE hang up, and exit. SMITH and MARCIE give each other an encouraging look, pick up their suitcases, then also exit.

SCENE 8

MULLAH ABDULLAH'S HOME -- ELECTION DAY.

MOOSE enters. He is droopy and near tears. His uncle, MULLAH ABDULLAH enters.

ABDULLAH
What is the matter? For three weeks now, all you do is cry. I told you, no DSL. ...

MOOSE runs to his uncle and hugs him. ABDULLAH is surprised, but not upset with the show of affection.

ABDULLAH (cont'd)
Oh... don't cry...

MOOSE
Oh, uncle...I am so sorry I didn't believe you about Mr. Smith. Every day now he's signing up kids to joins his Junior Firefighters! Even Omar and Adbul joined! They don't care that Mister Smith is... a bad man!

ABDULLAH
Mustafa, you've had so much disappointment in your short life. But you had to learn this lesson: The secular world does not care about us. They just want to take our stuff, and go! This is the inevitable result of their so-called democracy: the rape of our land, and the debasement of all that is holy. It's hardly a fair return for a little Nike "swoosh."

MOOSE, simmering, turns from crying to intense.

MOOSE
I must stop them...

ABDULLAH
(worried)
What do you mean?

MOOSE
(urgently)
It's Election Day! There will be a big ceremony. Regurgitov, Ambassador Payne, Marcie Chang, and Mr. Smith. Uncle, give me a bomb!

ABDULLAH
Hey, whoa! I may be misogynist, sexist, and closed-minded, but I'm no bomber!

MOOSE
What about all those bombs you have mounted on the wall in the Rec Room?

ABDULLAH
Oh, those! The CIA was handing them out like candy back in the '80s. I just keep them for Feng Shui.

A beeping is heard. ABDULLAH pulls out his smartphone, checks it

ABDULLAH.

Oh! Things are heating up in the Mad Monotheist chat room! I must go.

ABDULLAH turns to MOOSE sternly, but caringly.

ABDULLAH

When I return we will talk about how you may lead a more devout life.

MOOSE

(sullenly)

Okay. ...

MULLAH ABDULLAH exits. After a moment MOOSE checks to make sure his uncle is gone, runs off quickly in the other direction, returns with a bomb plastered with American flags, then exits.

SCENE 9

A STREET IN OBSCURISTAN -- ELECTION DAY.

MARCIE prepares to go on air. A blast of SNN theme music.

SNN ANNOUNCER (off-stage)
This is SNN!

MARCIE
(to camera)
Marcie Chang here. Well, the great day has finally arrived! In a few moments, long- suffering Obscuristanis will cast their votes for freedom, and America will gain another democratic ally in its (music cue) WAR ON TERROR." We'll be right back.

SNN ANNOUNCER
The "WAR ON TERROR" (music cue) is brought to you by... Chevy Trucks! Like a rock!

PAYNE and SMITH enter.

PAYNE
Big day, Jeff. Are you ready?

SMITH
I guess so, Ambassador. And thanks for helping me with that ScandalBurton interview. I sure learned a lot.

PAYNE
(strangely disappointed)
I'll admit, I was almost sorry you accepted their offer...

SMITH
(surprised)
You were?

PAYNE
(wistfully at first)
I had hoped. ... Well, never mind! You're one of us now. And who knows? Perhaps, together, we can whip ScandalBurton into shape...

Suddenly REGURGITOV's music begins to play, and a grinning REGURGITOV triumphantly enters, waving to the crowd..

MARCIE
(to camera)
We're back, on a joyous Election Day in Obscuristan!

A FANFARE is heard, as the GOON brings on a podium. A large banner, with REGURGITOV's face, appears upstage.

REGURGITOV gets behind the podium, and after a moment cuts off what was apparently recorded cheering.

REGURGITOV
My fellow citizens! I feel that I have run a good, clean campaign -- unsullied by issues, or even promises. I have stood ready to answer all questions -- had any been asked -- and though no opposition candidate emerged, I relished the heated Presidential Debate! And now, thanks to our American friends, the day has finally come for us to experience the full flower of democracy!

Cheers as REGURGITOV, joined by SMITH and PAYNE, faces the crowd, hands held together in triumph. REGURGITOV begins to leave as PAYNE steps behind the podium.

PAYNE
As his Excellency –

REGURGITOV stops.

REGURGITOV
(again relishing the word)
"Excellency!"

REGURGITOV gives a big thumbs up, exits.

PAYNE
– goes to cast the first stone of electoral freedom, Obscuristanis will experience the true meaning of American-style Democracy -- and like us Americans, they will finally know exactly what their vote is worth. And now we should hear from Jeff Smith, our own Election Observer!

PAYNE steps aside, as SMITH takes the podium.

SMITH
Thank you, Ambassador Payne.

SMITH addresses the crowd and the camera.

Song: "AS AN AMERICAN"

AS AN AMERICAN, AMONG THE TRUTHS

I HOLD TO BE SELF-EVIDENT,

IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY NATION

TO CHOOSE ITS OWN GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE NOT HERE TO TELL YOU

WHAT TO DO,

YOU'RE AN INDEPENDENT NATION,

THAT CHOICE IS UP TO YOU.

WHAT I WANT TO DO

IS TO INSURE YOU HAVE THAT CHOICE,

AND THAT THE VOTES ARE COUNTED FAIRLY,

AND WE HEAR THE PEOPLE'S VOICE!

PAYNE (speaking)
Well said, Jeff.

SMITH

A REALLY FREE AND FAIR ELECTION'S

GONNA HAPPEN HERE.

TO THAT END I PRESENT –

CANDIDATE RALIF NADIR!

MARCIE stomps on a trap door, and NADIR suddenly pops up. NADIR crosses to the podium shaking SMITH's hand on the way.

PAYNE
What?

MARCIE
(to camera)
Saved from the forces who tried to slander and kill him, Professor Nadir has reappeared just in time for the election.

SMITH
Isn't that swell?

MARCIE
Ambassador?

PAYNE realizes she is live on camera, and must sound positive.

PAYNE
Yes. Swell.

At the podium, NADIR faces his people.

NADIR
(sings)

A CREDIT TO YOUR NATION, MR. SMITH,

IS WHAT YOU ARE,

I ONLY WISH THAT AMERICANS LIKE YOU

WERE IN CHARGE!

THEN WE COULD MEET AS NATIONS ON

AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD,

WITHOUT YOUR BOOT ON OUR NECK

FORCING THAT WE YIELD!

TO MY FELLOW OBSCURISTANIS I PROUDLY STATE,

THAT I'M A PRESIDENTIAL WRITE-IN CANDIDATE!

I HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE ONLY INDEPENDENT

GROUP IN THE LAND –

THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS OF –

NADIR, SMITH, and MARCIE all raise their hands in the Junior Firefighters salute.

NADIR, SMITH MARCIE

OBSCURISTAN!

NADIR

IN EVERY VILLAGE,

EVERY CITY EVERY TOWN

THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS ARE

MAKING THEIR ROUNDS!

SPREADING THE WORD SO THAT PEOPLE CAN SEE

THEY REALLY HAVE A CHOICE: REGURGITOV OR ME!

NADIR (speaking)
My fellow Obscuristanis: do not vote your fear, vote your heart.

Suddenly a GOON with a machine gun enters. He levels the gun at NADIR.

GOON
There you are!

NADIR ducks behind the podium as SMITH lunges at the GOON.

SMITH

What!

GOON

Back! All of you, back!

GOON points gun at SMITH and MARCIE.

PAYNE

Stop that! We're on television!

GOON point gun at PAYNE, too.

GOON

(furiously)

Shut up! I am one Obscuristani who cannot be whipped!

The GOON looks at SMITH, PAYNE, and MARCIE with with outraged hatred.

GOON (cont'd)

You infidels... you come here... you –

GOON points gun at SMITH.

GOON (cont'd)

Infect our land with your ideas –

GOON points gun at PAYNE.

GOON (cont'd)

Try to make us weak, try to make us be like you! We do not want to be like you!

GOON turns, addresses audience.

GOON (cont'd)

You think everybody envies you, loves you. Everybody hates you! But ... Allah has allowed you to rule the world ... for now. So we will wait...

GOON points gun at NADIR again.

GOON (cont'd)

But this man is a traitor to Obscuristan -- and him, with all your power, you cannot save!

GOON puts gun to NADIR's head, preparing to shoot . Just before he can pull the trigger MOOSE runs in, holding his bomb.

MOOSE

Death to the enemies of Obscuristan!!

Everyone, even the GOON, recoils in terror.

SMITH

Moose!

MOOSE

I have come up with my own rule, Mr. Smith: When people betray you and cheat your country ... BLOW THEM UP!

MOOSE activates bomb, and lifts it above his head.. Bomb begins to tick.

ALL

No!

MOOSE sees NADIR.

MOOSE

(relieved)

Professor Nadir? You're alive!

NADIR

For the moment!

SMITH grabs the bomb away from MOOSE and tries to dispose of it, but it seems anywhere he would throw it someone will be injured. Unable to find anywhere near SMITH runs off-stage with the bomb.

GOON

Not that way! His Excellency!

GOON exits after SMITH.

PAYNE

Jeff, no!

A tremendous explosion off-stage. Debris flies on from the destroyed polling place. MARCIE PAYNE, and MOOSE run to see the damage.

PAYNE (cont'd)

Someone get an ambulance!

MARCIE

It's... too late. The polling place -- is destroyed...

They are all devastated, as they realize SMITH has been killed..

NADIR

Mr. Smith... saved us.

PAYNE, overcome with remorse.

PAYNE

No! I'm not worth saving! I'm a fraud!

PAYNE takes the mic from MARCIE.

PAYNE (cont'd)
(to camera)
There's oil in Obscuristan! And the White House wants it -- for ScandalBurton! We don't care about democracy, we don't care about freedom -- all we care about are profits!

PAYNE starts to break down.

PAYNE (cont'd)
Jeff... forgive me!

PAYNE collapses, as all are shocked at the confession, and saddened at SMITH's death. They are so shocked and saddened they don't notice SMITH enter, battered.

SMITH
Gosh!

ALL
(screaming)
Aaaaaah!

MARCIE
Jeff!

PAYNE
You're alive! But we thought –

SMITH
I threw the bomb, and everyone ducked inside the voting booths!

PAYNE
Voting booths?

SMITH
Remember I told you I was going to make them all fireproof? Well, a Junior Firefighter is always thorough!

Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

MOOSE
That's Rule No. 6!

MOOSE runs to SMITH, gives SMITH a big hug.

MOOSE (cont'd)
Mr. Smith, you are a hero! I'm hecka-sorry I tried to blow you up.

SMITH
That's okay, Moose. *(playfully)* Just don't do it again.

MOOSE
Yes, sir!

PAYNE
Jeff, I'm terribly sorry. So much of this has been my fault.

SMITH
Well, that's true, ma'am. But I knew, in the end, you wouldn't let democracy down!

SMITH playful gives PAYNE an "aw, shucks" punch on the chin.

PAYNE
Gee, thanks, Jeff...

MOOSE
Well, Mr. Smith, looks like it's all gonna work out.

SMITH
This time, Moose. But if the citizens of Obscuristan -- or any nation -- let just one fixed election go by without doing something about it, they could lose Democracy forever!

MOOSE
Wow.

SMITH
But don't worry -- remember Rule 10 of the Junior Firefighters –

SMITH and MOOSE raise their hands in Junior Firefighter salute.

Junior Fire Fighter fanfare!

SMITH AND MOOSE
"If we all work together, we can do anything."

ENTIRE CAST indicates audience

SMITH AND CAST
(to audience)
Everybody put your right hand up! And –

CAST AND AUDIENCE
"If we all work together, we can do anything."

Reprise: "AS AN AMERICAN"

ALL

AND WE'LL HAVE FREEDOM

FOR EVERY MAN, WOMAN, BOY AND GIRL!

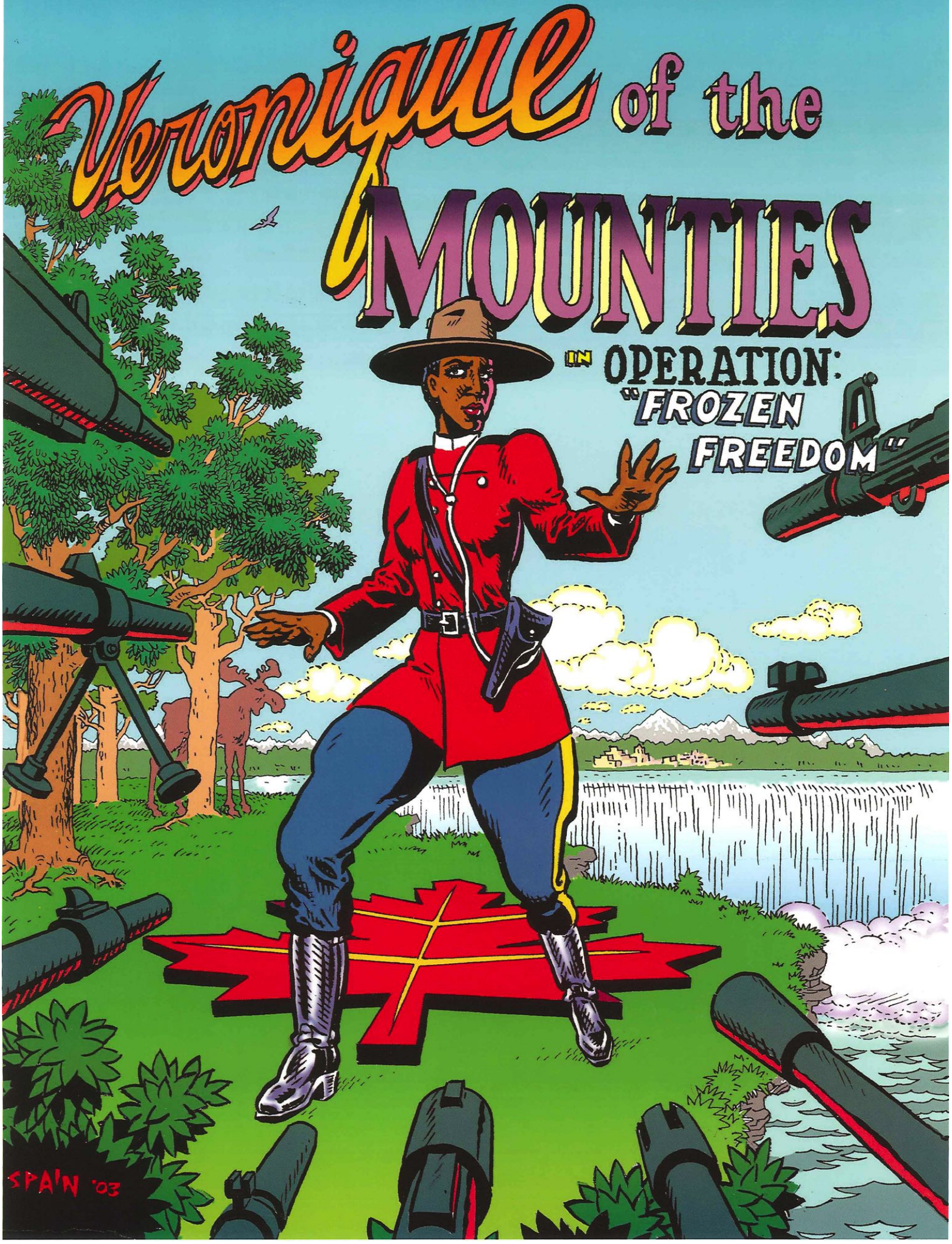
THE CAST OF MR. SMITH GOES TO OBSCURISTAN

End of Play.

Veronique of the Mounties

in:
"Operation Frozen Freedom"

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan, Bruce Barthol
Lyrics by Bruce Barthol, Music by Jason Sherbundy


Veronique of the
MOUNTIES
IN OPERATION:
"FROZEN
FREEDOM"
SPAIN '03

When the United States invaded Iraq and Afghanistan every wild accusation possible was used to justify the invasions: 9/11, religious fanatics, women's rights, poison gas, nuclear weapons, socialism! And Americans, as they had done whenever called to by their country, rallied around every lie. America was under siege again, and only a far-flung war could save our babies!

And… not true.

But eventually, in Walls Street's endless struggle to distract Americans from how we are being stripped of rights and wealth, the United States may run out of distant countries to invade.

What then?

Who are we if we aren't at war somewhere? Who will Americans demonize as our corporations steal their natural resources? Who will our military contractors use to justify our sky high military budget? How will we rationalize our increasing police state if we don't have a nation threatening us? Who will our media rant about? And which nation's evil, eminent threat can distract us from an unpopular, incompetent president, underfunded schools, crumbling roads, a rapacious elite, criminal bankers, shuttered factories…?

Well, Canada is right there…wait... what the heck has been protecting the all this time?

And in this classic wartime spy thriller it is up to Veronique of the Mounties to save Canada!

It was Fourth of July, 2003. The United States had begun the invasion of Iraq just a few months earlier, on March 20. With that attack, our country initiated a reign of chaos and violence in the Middle East that continues unabated to this day, 14 years later.

But on that Independence Day, we didn't know the future. We only knew our country had just committed a war crime by attacking a country that had never posed a threat. Two years of mass demonstrations around the world, combined with United Nations censure, had failed to stop the Bush/Cheney administration's plans to grab the oil that belonged to the Iraqis. We were devastated.

We gathered on July 4 with like-minded souls in Dolores Park for our yearly political/cultural ritual of the first performance of the new play by the San Francisco Mime Troupe. We wondered how the Mime Troupe would transform this terrible disaster and our grief into a story that would heal us a little and entertain us a lot. We needed to reflect and we needed to laugh. We got there early, spread out our blankets on the grass. Some of us wandered through the crowd, greeting friends. Some laid out the picnic they had brought along. Some of us sat under the trees far from the stage, seeking shade. Some sat up front under the beating sun, to see and hear better.

And then the Mime Troupe gave us the hilarious, slashingly furious, humane and often ridiculous Veronique of the Mounties. Yes! Led by that quintessential corporate/poltical villain, Vice President Cheney, the U.S. had invaded Canada! It was deliciously silly and at the same time ominously real. We followed the journey of the heroic Afro-Canadian Mountie, Sargent Veronique Du Bois, as she successfully fought to forestall the conquest of Canada by its profit-maddened southern neighbor. The intensity of the critique of our own country was leavened with terrific songs and vaudevillian comic schtick.

The short-tempered Veronique was brilliantly realized by Velina Brown, who also potrayed her "twin cousin," a flirtatious Condoleeza Rice. But Veronique couldn't have triumphed without her two sidekicks – Dorothea, librarian turned bartender, and (my favorite) Harry, homeless alcoholic Vietnam vet. While most characters in Veronique of the Mounties have some element of caricature, Harry was real. We see his like on the streets of San Francisco every day. Cast aside by our society, how great that Harry, big-hearted and courageous, could help save the day.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe brought us together that Fourth of July for healing and great fun. And I know there must have been a few Harry's in the audience who were especially comforted to see one of their tribe transformed into a hero.
TERRY BAUM, PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR, ACTOR, ACTIVIST, FOUNDER OF LILITH THEATER

"This satire hits everything from the erosion of civil liberties to the rape of the environment, political cronyism, privatization of public services and, of course, George W. Bush."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ed Holmes
Willy
Bucky
Hamid
Prime Minister
General Preston
Professor Hulot
Sargent Veronique Du Bois
Ken Uberman
Soldier 1
H.S.S. Officer 2
Vive President Dick Cheney
Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Buffy Stern
Dorothea Whitman
Harry
Zeke
H.S.S. Officer 1
John MacGuffin
Bob Mandrake
Jack Rommel
Elanor Rasputin
Kid 1
Kid 2
Reverend

VERONIQUE OF THE MOUNTIES opened on July 4th, 2003, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan with the following cast:

Ed Holmes, General Preston, Dick Cheney, Harry.....Ed Holmes*
Willy, H.S.S. Officer 1, Rommel, Reverend.....Michael Carriero
Hamid, Ken Uberman, Zeke, MandrakE……..….Conrad Cimarra*
Bucky, Hulot, H.S.S. Officer 2, MacGuffin, Kid…..…Christian Cagigal*
Veronique Du Bois, Condoleezza Rice……..Velina Brown*
Soldier 1, Buffy Stern, Rasputin, Kid 2…….……Bekka Fink
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

ON TELEVISION

ED HOLMES, a middle-aged man wearing a cardigan, enters. (Throughout the show there are various onstage positions and drop-down flaps in the walls which represent televisions. When on stage the television reporters, commentators, and guests address the audience as the camera.)

HOLMES
Hi, folks, I'm Ed Holmes. Many Americans still want to know...why are we invading Canada? Aren't the Canadians our friends?

On another part of the stage a scene begins to unfold: BUCKY, a Canadian man dressed for the rigors of ice fishing, enters. After a moment another man, WILLY, similarly attired, enters. Both speak with stereotypical Canadian accents.

WILLY
Hey! Bucky!

BUCKY
Is that there Willy Grissom?

WILLY
Hi-dee-ho!

BUCKY
From up near Moose Ankle, eh?

WILLY
Oh, yeah, that's me alright.

WILLY and BUCKY open a trapdoor in the stage, pull out poles, and begin ice fishing.

HOLMES
Well, in this nation of good, simple, trusting people evil has taken root...

Another man, HAMID, enters. He is of Middle Eastern decent, and is wearing a robe, a turban, a fur coat, and mukluks. He, too, has a fishing pole. HAMID is acting very shifty.

HAMID
(trying to cover his heavy Arabic accent)
Howdy, eh?

BUCKY
Who's that?

HAMID
It is I, Hamid Mackenzie, here to share your icy fish hole.

BOTH
(trustingly)
Okie-dokie!

HOLMES
And what does the Canadian Government do about this threat? Nothing!

HAMID
Tell me, my Canadian brothers, how far is it to (ominously) the American border?

BUCKY
'Bout two miles yonder, eh?

HAMID
Just a grenades throw away...

HOLMES
That is why America launched Operation Frozen Freedom!

Suddenly a U.S. MARINE enters. MARINE strikes a heroic action pose.

MARINE
Freeze right there, Osama!

HAMID
I shall not, living, into your filthy American hands fall!

Suddenly there is a tug on HAMID's fishing pole. He has caught a fish, which he pulls in an d uses it as a weapon in a hand-to-hand struggle with the MARINE. WILLY and BUCKY watch in shock as HAMID and MARINE fight. HAMID breaks free and rips open his coat, revealing a vest of dynamite sticks. HAMID pulls a detonator from his pocket..

HAMID
America, here I come!

The MARINE attacks HAMID with fishing pole, and in the struggle MARINE ends up with HAMID's detonator.

HAMID
Wait! Don't blow me up until I reach my target - (to audience) The Liberty Bell!

HAMID runs away. HOLMES takes the detonator from MARINE, pushes the detonator button, and the offstage HAMID is blown up. Bits of HAMID rain down on the stage.

WILLY
(to MARINE)
Thanks, eh!

MARINE
Don't thank me -

HOLMES

Thank... America!

HOLMES and MARINE strike heroic pose, as WILLY, and BUCKY stand nearby. Heroic military music begins to play.

HOLMES

American troops, with those of our Coalition ally, Greenland, are moving in - securing our northern border, and ensuring that freedom, justice, and America will be safe... just like we did in Operation Enduring Freedom in Iraq, Operation Abundant Justice in North Korea, Operation Launching Liberty in Libya, Operation Mucho Free-o in Venezuela, Operation...

WILLY, BUCKY, MARINE exit. HOLMES exits, but returns behind a drop-down flap tv screen, as the scene changes to -

SCENE 1

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA.

The PRIME MINISTER of Canada enters, watching the end of HOLMES' public service announcement. PRIME MINISTER then mutes sound on TV.

PRIME MINISTER
This is unbelievable! Why is the United States declaring war on Canada? We've always been friends, allies, we've even let them beat us at hockey! All this propaganda -

PRIME MINISTER turns sound of television back on.

HOLMES
- Operation Just Payback in France, Operation It's About Time in Cuba -

PRIME MINISTER turns off TV.

PRIME MINISTER
And these insane demands! Our Complete disarmament! A two hundred mile anti-terrorist security zone above the border! And the closing of all Molson Ale breweries! The fiends! What is going on? And why now? And who can stop it?

GENERAL PRESTON, a blustery uniformed, middle-aged man, enters.

PRESTON
Mr. Prime Minister -

PRIME MINISTER
General Preston...

PRESTON
There are U.S. military units massing along the border! Infantry at Vancouver! Tanks at Windsor -

PRIME MINISTER
What about their coalition ally, Greenland?

PRESTON
Well, there is an unidentified fishing boat off Newfoundland. They have us surrounded!

PRIME MINISTER
So, it's hopeless, eh?

PRESTON
I just don't understand it! I never thought America would attack us.

PRIME MINISTER
And why now?

An excited French Canadian man in a lab coat, DR. HULOT, enters. HULOT is carrying a small briefcase.

HULOT
I have found the answer!

PRIME MINISTER
Not now, Dr. Hulot! We are dealing with questions of national security!

HULOT
So am I! I know why we are suddenly vulnerable to attack by the Americans!

PRIME MINISTER
Why?

HULOT
They have discovered the secret of... the Petrified Maple Leaf!

Musical sting!

PRIME MINISTER
What does a leaf have to do with the invasion of Canada?

HULOT
Everything! The Petrified Maple Leaf has deterred U.S. aggression toward Canada since the lightning strike that created it one hundred and ninety-one years ago!

PRIME MINISTER
You're telling me all these years we've been defended by a Leaf?

PRESTON
Well, it's cheaper than a missile defense program...

PRIME MINISTER
But what power does it have?

HULOT
The Leaf generates subliminal thoughts to anyone south of the border, thoughts such as "It's cold up in Canada, y'all," and "No reason to invade up there, dude."

PRESTON
How did the Americans find out about it?

HULOT
Some years ago, during a faculty exchange with Stanford University, a Professor Rice -

PRIME MINISTER
Condoleezza Rice?

HULOT
Oui! She learned about the Leaf on a trip to Ottawa. She must have taken it during her last state visit, and left this imitation in its place!

HULOT opens the briefcase, revealing a large plastic maple Leaf.

HULOT
Once the true leaf is returned to Canadian hands the Americans will forget about us again!

PRIME MINISTER
We've got to recover that Leaf! And I have just the person!

PRIME MINISTER pushes intercom button.

PRIME MINISTER
Send in Sergeant Du Bois! She's a dedicated Mountie and a master of disguise. She does have one little flaw... she hates Americans.

PRIME MINISTER
But can she do it?

PRESTON
Yes!

A woman in the full uniform and hat of a the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, VERONIQUE DU BOIS, enters and stands at attention. He has a very proud military baring, and a Canadian accent.

VERONIQUE
Sergeant Veronique Du Bois, sir.

PRESTON
At ease.

PRIME MINISTER
Thank you for coming. We have an important assignment for you.

PRESTON
It will be difficult.

VERONIQUE
Yes Sir.

PRESTON
It will be dangerous.

VERONIQUE
Yes Sir.

PRESTON
It will require you to go...south of the border!

Musical sting as VERONIQUE is struck with a deep anger.

VERONIQUE
America... I don't know if I can do that, sir.

PRESTON
Why not?

VERONIQUE
Well, sir... It's personal.

PrIME MINISTER
Sergeant, you're our only hope.

VERONIQUE
Oh, jeez!

PRIME MINISTER
You've got to save our country.

VERONIQUE
(overcoming her anger)
I'll do it... for Canada!

PRIME MINISTER
Thank you sergeant. You must leave right away.

PRESTON
You'll have to contact the underground in the United States -

HULOT
I am Dr. Hulot. I will tell you the history of the Petrified Maple Leaf -

VERONIQUE
What does a Leaf have to do with the invasion of Canada?

PRIME MINISTER, PRESTON & HULOT
Everything!

HULOT begins to explain the history as they all exit.

Velina Brown as VERONIQUE, Keiko Shimosato Carreiro as DOROTHEA
Photo by David Allen

ON TELEVISION

KEITH UBERMAN, a square-jawed reporter, addresses the audience as the camera.

UBERMAN

Good evening, America. This is Ken Uberman, BSNBC News, and I am here, in the tiny hamlet of Buffalo New York where, in a moment, American troops will cross the treacherous Niagara River and begin Operation Frozen Freedom!

A whistle is heard, and U.S. SOLDIERS begin to march across the stage.

UBERMAN

Wait... Wait...I believe this is it! Yes, I'm getting confirmation that this is, in fact, this is, yes, this is the it we've been waiting for! Canadian liberation is at hand! Let's get some comments from some of our brave soldiers at this historic moment. Excuse me -

SOLDIER 1

Yes, sir?

UBERMAN

What's your name, private?

SOLDIER 1

Johnson, sir.

UBERMAN

The Secretary of Defense said, in an exclusive interview on BSNBC, that the Niagara River may be defended by the elite Parliamentary Guard, the fanatical units of this ruthless regime. America wants to know what you, the common soldier, you, feel at this moment?

Song: "PATRIOT'S BLOOD"

SOLDIER 1

MY GRANDAD ALWAYS TOLD ME YOU GOTTA STAND

UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT,

THAT YOU GOTTA NIP TYRANNY

IN THE BUD.

THAT ANY PLACE WORTH LIVING IN SHOULD BE

WORTH DYING FOR,

AND THE TREE OF LIBERTY IS WATERED WITH

PATRIOT'S BLOOD

UBERMAN
Sounds like a wise man. Where does he live?

SOLDIER 1
Montreal.

UBERMAN is taken aback, and suddenly an officer from Homeland Security Services - H.S.S.0FFICER 2 - appears. His very sharp uniform is reminiscent of a Gestapo uniform.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
(sharply, to SOLDIER 1)
Private, could I have a word with you, please?

SOLDIER 1
But I gotta catch up with my outfit -

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
Don't worry. I'll have you back in a jiffy. Would you excuse us, Ken?

UBERMAN
Certainly.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
Right this way, private.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 and SOLDIER 1 exit.

UBERMAN
And there you have it, America... Operation Frozen Freedom has begun! And if the best defense is a good offense Americans should sleep safely tonight knowing our nation is the most offensive on earth!

The scene shifts, and UBERMAN is now on a television screen in -

SCENE 2

THE WAR ROOM OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

A balding middle-aged White man in a suit, VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY, enters. Having just watched the end of the televised report CHENEY is a happy man.

CHENEY
(mutes TV with remote)
I love these embedded reporters. Surround them with troops, show them only what we want them to see, and if they get too nosey -

CHENEY snaps the tv off as if shooting it, and the drop-flap closes.

CHENEY
BANG! Too close to the front. Worked in Iraq.

A smartly dressed Black woman, CONDOLEEZZA RICE enters. CONDOLEEZZA is carrying a briefcase.

Condoleezza
Mr. Vice President...

There is clearly some unacknowledged romantic tension between CONDOLEEZZA and CHENEY. They speak to each other with romantic tension, only broken when either feels they've goon too far. They are both aroused by each other, and power Theirs is very much a melodramatic love.

CHENEY
It's wonderful to see you, Ms. Rice.

CONDOLEEZZA
Mr. Vice President, please, we've known each other for years, call me ...Condi...

CHENEY
Call me... Dick.

CONDOLEEZZA
Dick...

CHENEY
Condi... Did you bring it?

CONDOLEEZZA
Of course.

CONDOLEEZZA opens the briefcase, and displays the authentic Petrified Maple Leaf.

CHENEY
Did you run into any trouble?

CONDOLEEZZA
No problem.

CHENEY
Looks like everything you said about the Leaf was true. Suddenly Americans will believe any crap we say about Canada.

CONDOLEEZZA
Without the Leaf those snow monkeys are defenseless! I love the way you've handled the press...

CHENEY
And I love the way you're handling the State Department...

The passion between the two begins to grow as they are drawn towards each other. Melodramatic love music begins to play.

CONDOLEEZZA
And I love... that you love it!

CHENEY
Condi!

CONDOLEEZZA
Dick!

A moment looking into each others eye sis all they can handle. They separate, atingle with passion.

CONDOLEEZZA
You wanted to talk to me about something...

CHENEY
Condi, let me run something by you. Eventually Americans are going to wonder why we're spending hundreds of billions of dollars invading other countries, rather than spending the money here at home.

CONDOLEEZZA
All they see are the closed schools, hospitals, social programs... They don't understand that it's all part of a painful but necessary evolution to the new American Century!

CHENEY
But for us to stay in power after the next election we're going to need a scapegoat. Someone to blame for all the suffering.

CONDOLEEZZA
2004...

CHENEY
No, with the way the economy's going we've decided to announce a vague terrorist threat in November 2004, close the polls for public safety. No. I was thinking about 2008.

CONDOLEEZZA
Who'll be the scapegoat?

CHENEY
I was thinking... George!

CONDOLEEZZA
Dick!

CHENEY
Condi!

CONDOLEEZZA
No!

CHENEY
Yes!

CONDOLEEZZA
George and Laura are like the white brother and sister I never had!

CHENEY
The man almost lost a fixed election.

CONDOLEEZZA
So who'll run for the White House?

CHENEY
I was thinking - Cheney/Rice, 2008!

CONDOLEEZZA
Dick!

CHENEY
Condi!

CONDOLEEZZA
I never dreamed...

CHENEY
We can't be constrained by loyalty. We're the only ones who can save the world from itself.

CONDOLEEZZA
Don't say that!

CHENEY
It's true! Condi!

CONDOLEEZZA
Dick?

CHENEY
We're the superior people. We were born to rule... together!

Song: "SUPERIOR PEOPLE"

CHENEY

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FREDERICH NIETZCHE

AND OUR OWN AYN RAND,

THE FUTURE IS WAITING

A PROMISED LAND.

WHERE THE MASSES MEDIOCRITY CANNOT STOP

THE SUPERIOR PERSON'S RISE TO THE TOP!

SUPERIOR PEOPLE ARE THE HOPE OF THE WORLD,

THE SUPERIOR BOY,

DICK indicates CONDOLEEZZA

CHENEY

THE SUPERIOR GIRL!

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

IT'S SUPERIOR PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHAT'S BEST,

FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT SIMILARLY BLESSED.

The song becomes very Fred Astaire/Ginger Rodgers.

CONDOLEEZZA

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE BEST,

IS GOOD FOR THE LEAST

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT'S HOW WEALTH IS

INCREASED

CONDOLEEZZA

THE LITTLE MAN WANTS NOTHING TO HINDER

HIS OWN ASCENT

INTO THE RANKS OF THE SUPERIOR,

CHENEY

THE POWERFUL!

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

THE AFFLUENT!

CHENEY

SUPERIOR PEOPLE ARE THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

CONDOLEEZZA

THE SUPERIOR BOY,

Velina Brown as CONDOLEEZZA RICE, Ed Holmes as DICK CHENEY

THE SUPERIOR GIRL,

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

IT'S SUPERIOR PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHAT'S BEST
FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT SIMILARLY BLESSED.

CONDOLEEZZA

THE COMMON MAN DOESN'T WANT TO ROCK THE
BOAT,
HE WANTS HIS DREAM OF JOINING US TO STAY
AFLOAT.

CHENEY

THAT'S WHY EVEN THE MOST DESTITUTE
SON OF A BITCH -
DOESN'T REALLY WANT TO TAX THE
RICH!

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

SUPERIOR PEOPLE ARE THE HOPE OF THE WORLD -

CHENEY

THE SUPERIOR BOY,

CONDOLEEZZA

THE SUPERIOR GIRL.

CHENEY AND CONDELEEZZA

IT'S SUPERIOR PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHAT'S BEST

CHENEY and CONDOLEEZZA end in each others arms. After a moment the proximity is too much and they break apart.

CONDOLEEZZA

Dick?

CHENEY

Condi?

CONDOLEEZZA

How do you know that I'm one of the superior people?

CHENEY

You're the American Dream! Talented, intelligent... Nothing can keep you out of the White House!

CONDOLEEZZA

Thank, Dick.

CHENEY

You'd have to be a traitor!

(Both laugh at the thought)

Or related to one!

Big music sting as CONDOLEEZZA stops laughing. She looks a little nervous. H.S.S. OFFICER 2 enters, holding a letter.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Excuse me, I have a message from one of our operatives in Canada.

CHENEY takes letter.

CHENEY

Let me see. (reads) Well, well... I have to go, and I better put this in a safe place.

CHENEY takes the briefcase hold the Leaf.

CONDOLEEZZA

Of course.

CHENEY starts to exit.

CONDOLEEZZA

Mr. Vice President...

CHENEY stops, turns.

CONDOLEEZZA

(cooing)

Say it...

CHENEY
(enticingly)
Cheney/Rice, 2008!

CONDOLEEZZA shivers at the words, as CHENEY leaves.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
Ma'am, we're also getting a news report from the front!

CONDOLEEZZA
Fine. Switch it on!

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 clicks remote and the TV snaps to life. CONDOLEEZZA and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 exit as a reporter, BUFFY STERN, enters as if on the TV. She is wearing designer camo-chic, and is a combination of trying to be tough / trying to be sexy.

Bekka Fink as BUFFY STERN, Michael Carreiro as MAN

ON TELEVISION

A BLEAK WHITE ARCTIC LANDSCAPE.

BUFFY STERN is next to a MAN dressed for the Canadian winter.

BUFFY STERN
This is Buffy Stern, Pox News, at the North Pole with the 202nd airborne, where we've liberated the axis of the earth! I'm with a man who was just freed from a repressive Canadian regime, a regime so oppressive in its repressiveness that he was forced to live in a house made of ice!

MAN
It's an igloo.

BUFFY STERN
How does it feel to be liberated?

MAN
It's okay, I guess. Can I go now? My blubber is boiling.

MAN exits into Igloo.

BUFFY STERN
Understandable. When I think about Canadian tyranny it makes my blubber boil, too! Earlier reports that the North Pole would be defended by the fearsome Parliamentary Guard, proved false, and now we believe these elite fanatical troops are grouping to defend the vital fortress town of Saskatoon. And what about the Canadian Weapons of Mass Destruction? All we can do is hope our brave troops find them before this desperate regime rains icy death down on defenseless America!

The scene is replaced with the interior of a typical small bar. STERN is now on a television.

SCENE 3

A BAR IN THE NORTH OF AMERICA.

A primly dressed, middle aged woman, DOROTHEA, is behind the bar, wiping glasses. An older disgruntled, disheveled veteran in a ragged old uniform, HARRY, enters. HARRY notices BUFFY STERN on tv.

HARRY
For God's sake, Dorothea, turn that crap off!

DOROTHEA
Don't you wanna know how the war's going?

HARRY
They all go the same way: couple of corporations make billions bombing, some other corporations make billions rebuilding.

DOROTHEA turns TV off with remote. STERN exits.

HARRY
How about the house buys a round to celebrate another glorious victory?

DOROTHEA
Sorry Harry, no more freebies.

HARRY
Can't believe I fought for this country and I can't even get a free drink. Well, at least it's warm in here.

Song: "A SHOT AND A BEER"

HARRY

I CAME BACK SICK FROM THE FIRST GULF WAR,

BUT THE V.A. SAID I WAS FINE.

I PUNCHED MY COMMANDING OFFICER

WHEN HE TOLD ME NOT TO WHINE.

THEN THE ARMY THEY CASHIERED ME

AFTER SERVING NINETEEN YEARS,

SO COME ON DOT. GIMME A SHOT,

A SHOT AND A BOTTLE OF BEER...

I'M AN INVISIBLE MAN WHO SLEEPS IN HIS VAN,

AND I DON'T KNOW HOW THINGS GOT THIS WAY,

BUT I AM HEADING DOWN THE TUBES,

ALONG WITH THE US OF A.

DOROTHEA

I told you, Harry. Ever since that chain bought us I gotta account for every shot.

Ed Holmes as HARRY, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as DOROTHEA Photo by Neil Miller

HARRY
Great. So what's the new name?

DOROTHEA
Big Ed's Alcohol Hut.

HARRY
First Disney buys all the TV stations, Clear Channel gets all the radio stations, Starbucks buys Hooters... this country's going to hell! I shoulda stayed in Vietnam when the war ended - by now at least I could have a job making Nikes.

HARRY

I WORKED MCDONALDS', WENDY'S AND KFC -

EXTRA CHEESE? YOU WANT THAT TO GO?

I EVEN GAVE WALMART A SHOT

AND MAN, THAT'S LOWER THAN LOW!

I CAN'T GET UP IN THE MORNING OR TO SLEEP

AT NIGHT,

I'M SICK AND FADING AWAY,

SO COME ON DOT. GIMME A SHOT,

AND WE'LL DRINK TO THE USA!

I'M AN INVISIBLE MAN WHO SLEEPS IN HIS VAN,

AND I DON'T KNOW HOW THINGS GOT THIS WAY,

BUT I AM HEADING DOWN THE TUBES

ALONG WITH THE U. S. OF A...

DOROTHEA
Come on, Harry, America's best days are ahead.

HARRY

YES, I AM HEADING DOWN THE TUBES,

ALONG WITH THE U.S. OF A.

DOROTHEA
Hey don't worry. Now that the President privatized the Department of Labor, the last barrier to prosperity is gone!

HARRY
Yeah, just like hospitals were gonna get better when he privatized the Department of Health, and literacy was gonna go up when he privatized all the libraries.

Dramatic musical sting of DOROTHEA's reaction. HARRY reacts to DOROTHEA's obvious pain.

HARRY
Sorry, Dot.

DOROTHEA
That's okay, Harry. Sixteen years as a librarian, organizing the files, re-stocking the stacks, re-stacking the stocks, smelling the books, I was tired of it anyway...

VERONIQUE, in disguise, enters. She has re-configured her Mountie uniform into that of an American soldier, but is still wearing her Mountie hat.

DOROTHEA
Can I help you?

VERONIQUE
I'm looking for Dorothea's Oasis?

DOROTHEA
You found it.

VERONIQUE
Why's the sign say Alcohol Hut?

HARRY
Corporate America! I'd drink to that, if someone was buying...

VERONIQUE
Uh... Sure! Drinks for everyone to... Celebrate America's sweeping victory!

DOROTHEA
What'll it be?

VERONIQUE
(trying to be extra American)
Bud Light!

HARRY
Give me a Canadian Club.

DOROTHEA
Shhhh!

HARRY
Sorry, Dot.

VERONIQUE
What?

DOROTHEA
I don't know what it's like in the army, but back here you have to be careful. You never know who's listening...

HARRY
Homeland Security Services...

DOROTHEA & HARRY
H.S.S.SSSSSSSS...
(DOROTHEA and HARRY both hiss the last "s")

HARRY
If the government worked as hard at getting people jobs and housing as it does at blowin' up foreigners it wouldn't have to worry what we said about it!

DOROTHEA
Just be quiet. I'll see if I have any *(whispered)* C.C. in the back.

DOROTHEA exits.

VERONIQUE
So, come in here much?

HARRY
Much as I can... It's too cold on the street.

VERONIQUE's ears perk up at the phrase.

VERONIQUE
Did you say "it's too cold on the street"?

HARRY
Too cold to sleep in a van. If I'd known I was gonna be homeless I would've driven to Florida.

VERONIQUE
(clearly trying a code)
Well, it sure is cold in here.

HARRY
Been that way since the heater broke down back in '95.

VERONIQUE
Well, that would explain why it sure is cold in here.

HARRY
(annoyed)
Yes. It would.

DOROTHEA re-enters, gives both of them a drink.

DOROTHEA

Here ya go, Harry.

HARRY

So what do you call this?

DOROTHEA

A Jenna Bush.

A young likable, energetic man, ZEKE, enters the bar. He is wearing an H.S.S. Armband.

ZEKE

Hey, Dorothea! Hi Harry. D'ya see the news?

ZEKE turns on TV manually. BUFFY STERN appears.

BUFFY STERN

Shock!

HARRY picks up the tv remote, turns TV off. ZEKE turns on TV manually again. STERN re-appears.

BUFFY STERN

Awe!

HARRY turns TV off with remote. ZEKE turns on TV manually again.

BUFFY STERN

(shivering coquettishly)

Brrrr!

DOROTHEA takes remote from HARRY and manually turns of the TV.

DOROTHEA

Yeah, I saw it.

ZEKE

Whoowee! D'ya hear about the depleted uranium smart bullets our guys are using? I saw it on Discovery Channel. You, like, tag some stinkin' Canadian with a laser dot, fire your M-60, and the bullet is satellite guided right to him! Guy could be, like, home, later, eating his moose burger, and bam! Boom! Isn't that cool?

HARRY

What about his family?

ZEKE

If they didn't want to be collateral damage they should have been... (sings) "Born in the U.S.A." Man, I wish I was up there - but somebody's gotta defend the home

front. Couple more days, and I'll be full fledged H.S.S. So, Dot, whatchu got back there to feed a future Hero of the Homeland?

DOROTHEA
Let's see.... Some Freedom fries, Freedom toast, Freedom waffles, I could whip up some Freedom con Carne...

HARRY
Canadian bacon!

ZEKE
(horrified)
What?

HARRY
I am in the mood for some Canadian bacon!

ZEKE
Don't you mean Bush Bacon, Harry?

HARRY
I refuse to cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion, Zeke.

ZEKE
What the hell kinda talk is that?

DOROTHEA
Zeke, shouldn't you be outside findin' traitors or something?

ZEKE
Aw, come on Dorothea. It's too cold on the street.

VERONIQUE perks up again. ZEKE sees VERONIQUE.

ZEKE
Oh my God!
(salutes VERONIQUE)
Dot, why didn't you tell me we had a soldier in here? So, fresh from the front lines?

VERONIQUE
Yep. The Niagara Falls front. It was freezing up there! And you know, (trying code again) it sure is cold in here, too...

ZEKE
Not too cold for an American soldier! Whoowee! That's what I'm talking about! Kicking their frosty butts from here to Baghdad! S'weird. Couple a weeks ago Canada was just fishing trips and the tight leather pants of Celine Dion. Now it's like I can feel them Canadians up there, looking down on me. I can even smell them. Smells like old, wet hippies...

HARRY
I remember that smell...

ZEKE
It's the smell of Canadian treachery -

VERONIQUE winces. She clearly cannot bear it when an American says anything negative about Canada. This is the weakness to her being undercover the PRIME MINISTER mentioned.

ZEKE
Canadian stupidity -

VERONIQUE winces again.

ZEKE
And Canadian cowardice!

VERONIQUE is a wincing mess. Can she hold it together?

ZEKE
So, did you kick some canuck butt?

VERONIQUE's rage overcomes her training.

VERONIQUE
ARE YOU KIDDING? This country is so out of shape from years of Krispy Kremes and crack, so weak and stupid from years of video games and porn that when it came to a real fight Canada will whip you Americans good!

ZEKE
You Americans??

VERONIQUE
Um... I mean... the Canadians will whip us Americans good...

ZEKE
(suspicious)
Wait a minute...

Suddenly the door pops open and two officers from the Homeland Security Services, H.S.S OFFICER 1 and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 enter. They both are very WWII film typical Gestapo like in dress and manner.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Homeland...

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Security!

Michael Carreiro as H.S.S. OFFICER 1, Christian Cagigal as H.S.S. OFFICER 2, Ed Holmes as HARRY, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as DOROTHEA, Velina Brown as VERONIQUE

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Papers, please!

ZEKE, DOROTHEA, and VERONIQUE hand over their papers to H.S.S. OFFICER 2. HARRY pulls out some greasy mess and hands it over. OFFICER 2 brings papers to OFFICER 1

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Papers, sir.

OFFICER 1 begins to officiously pace while reading, but his way is blocked by OFFICER 2. OFFICER 1 glares at OFFICER 2.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Sorry.

OFFICER 2 steps out of the way. OFFICER 1 turns to pace back, but OFFICER 2 blocks OFFICER 1 again.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Sorry.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

(to the room)

We've had a report that a foreign saboteur may have slinked across the border...

ALL

No...

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

So for your safety all civilian travel on highways will soon be banned...

ALL

What?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Silence! Or you will all be sent to the Camps! We are no longer on Magenta Alert! Until the war is over we are all on Ultra Violet Alert! An alert so alarming the color cannot be seen with the human eye!

OFFICER 1 finishes with papers.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Well, everything seems to be in order...

ZEKE

Wait, sir...

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Yes?

ZEKE

It is my duty as a member of the Junior H.S.S. to report any suspicious activity.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Yes?

ZEKE

And I believe there is a traitor in this very room!

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 & 2

Yes?

ZEKE

Hiding in an American uniform!

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 & 2

No!

ZEKE

And that traitor is...

ZEKE's tries to point at VERONIQUE., but HARRY steps in the way.

HARRY

I want to watch some hockey!

ZEKE

Shut up, Harry! (to OFFICERS) Listen -

HARRY

It's Hockey Night in Canada!

ZEKE

(to OFFICERS)

But -

OFFICER 1 pushes past ZEKE to get to HARRY

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

So, we have a hockey fan, do we?

HARRY

(in his best *Canadian* accent)

What I really like is curling, eh?

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

UnAmerican swine!

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 slaps HARRY, without apparent effect. After a moment HARRY feigns pain.

DOROTHEA

Harry, what are you doing?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Careful, miss. I would hate to have to shut down such a charming establishment.

HARRY
Don't worry, Dot. The Camp's gotta be better than the street. Three hots and a cot in the only housing the Government's built in ten years.

DOROTHEA
Harry -

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 leads HARRY away. OFFICER 1 turns to ZEKE.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
You have been very helpful... A model citizen.

ZEKE is still trying to correct his mistake, and point out VERONIQUE.

ZEKE
Yeah, but -

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
This man was clearly a friend, yet you stabbed him in the back!

ZEKE
Yeah, but -

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
You have a bright future in H.S.S.

H.S.S. OFFICERS exits. ZEKE dithers for a moment.

ZEKE
Yeah, but -

ZEKE exits, chasing the OFFICERS.. DOROTHEA runs to the door, bolting it. VERONIQUE tries to get out.

VERONIQUE
I gotta get outta here...

DOROTHEA
Not so fast!

VERONIQUE
My unit is expecting me... I gotta report right away...

DOROTHEA
If you wanna go outside, fine, but... I think it's too cold on the street.

VERONIQUE unbolts the door, exits. After a moment she re-enters and re-bolts the door. She crosses at DOROTHEA, and leans in tight.

VERONIQUE
And it sure is cold in here, too...

DOROTHEA
Almost as cold as a glacier...

VERONIQUE looks at DOROTHEA, finally hearing the answer to her code. Both warily enter a coded conversation.

VERONIQUE
I hear some glaciers don't melt, even in summer...

DOROTHEA
I once had a cat named Summer...

VERONIQUE
I once had a dog named Winter...

DOROTHEA
My cat fell in a vat...

VERONIQUE
My dog fell in a bog..

DOROTHEA
And the only thing that saved them was...

BOTH
a Maple leaf!

Finally the code is verified, and the secret connection is made.

VERONIQUE
Sergeant Veronique Du Bois, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

DOROTHEA
Dorothea Whitman, librarian bartender.

VERONIQUE
It's good to see a fellow Canadian.

DOROTHEA
What makes you think I'm Canadian?

VERONIQUE
Well, you're so nice.

DOROTHEA
(raising voice)
We're not all rapscallions down here.
(both shhh)
I'm a member of LATEFEE - Librarians Against The Establishment of Federally Enforced Eavesdropping. We're an underground movement trying to save America.

VERONIQUE

From who?

DOROTHEA

From itself.

VERONIQUE

And you know where the Leaf is?

DOROTHEA pulls out huge dusty book from behind bar.

DOROTHEA

My sources tell me they are hiding it in the Vice President's Undisclosed Location.

VERONIQUE

Where is that?

DOROTHEA

Rapid City, South Dakota!

VERONIQUE

How do you know?

DOROTHEA opens page, points at it.

DOROTHEA

(indicating book)

Footnotes! Back when the Attorney General started burning books every librarian in the country took one of these. It's all the knowledge that's been accumulated by librarians for the past 225 years.

Suddenly there is a loud knock on the door.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Homeland Security! Open up!

ZEKE

Come on, Dorothea! Let us in!

DOROTHEA

Quick, this way!

They exit through a back door.

ON TELEVISION

Dramatic television music as an older, gruff man in a suit, and in a chair, MAGUFFIN, revolves on another part of the stage.MAGUFFIN's style is brusque, fast, and and cranky. He is a know it all who doesn't really listen.

MAGUFFIN

Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. America. I am John Maguffin, and you are watching... the Maguffin Report! (music)

As MACGUFFIN introduces his guests - MANDRAKE, ROMMEL, and ELENOR they revolve on at a different part of the stage.

MAGUFFIN

On tonight's panel Bob Mandrake from Business Month, Elanor Rasputin from SNN, and our friend Jack Rommel from NewsTime magazine - tonight's subject: Can America save the world? I put it to you, Bob Mandrake!

MANDRAKE

Yes.

MAGUFFIN

Jack?

ROMMEL

Yes.

MAGUFFIN

Elanor?

ELANOR

Well...

MAGUFFIN

The correct answer is: If not us, who? NEXT TOPIC! Before the war Canadians infiltrated every part of America. Is Canada the greatest threat to our nation since the Soviet Union - Jack Rommel!

ROMMEL

Yes.

MAGUFFIN

Elanor?

ELANOR

Well...

MAGUFFIN

Bobby?

MANDRAKE

Without question.

MAGUFFIN
Wrong! The answer is: biggest threat since Satan! FINAL QUESTION! After Canada has been defeated what will be the next target in the War on Terror - Elanoravich!

ELANOR
Well...

MAGUFFIN
Boberino?

MANDRAKE
Congo.

MAGUFFIN
Jackie-jack?

ROMMEL
England.

MAGUFFIN
You are all wrong! The correct answer is: Berkeley! That's all from the Maguffin Report until next time... Bye bye!

MAGUFFIN, MANDRAKE, ROMMEL, and ELENOR rotate off. End of show music.

SCENE 4

THE U.S. WAR ROOM.

CHENEY and CONDOLEEZZA are reviewing operation in front of a bank of video screens.

CHENEY
(happily reading communiques)
Calgary's crying. Winnipeg's whining.

CONDOLEEZZA
Those poor schnook canucks don't know what hit them!

CHENEY
And if we can convince Americans to attack Canada, a country that posed no threat to us at all, we can attack anybody! There is nothing that stands between us and -

CONDOLEEZZA
Pax Americana Corporatus! One multinational, under god!

CHENEY
The superior people will bring security American style to the world even if we have to invade every country to do it.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 and ZEKE enter. ZEKE is now wearing a the uniform of an H.S.S. cadet.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
(to CHENEY and CONDOLEEZZA)
Excuse me,
(to ZEKE)
Watch me and learn.
(to CHENEY and CONDOLEEZZA)
Sir, ma'am. The latest reports from the front.

OFFICER 1 hands CONDOLEEZZA and CHENEY more dispatches.

CONDOLEEZZA
(reading)
In the East we've taken the Maritimes, and are moving down the St. Lawrence -

CHENEY
So long Sault Saint Marie.

CONDOLEEZZA
Within 72 hours Ottawa will have no option but complete surrender. Operation Frozen Freedom is coming off without a single glitch!

ZEKE

Woooooo!

CHENEY looks at ZEKE.

CHENEY

This the new guy?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Yes, sir.

CHENEY

Any foreign relatives?

ZEKE

Gosh, only if you count Wisconsin, sir.

CHENEY

Madison. I hate that place.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

This is the Trainee that spotted that Canadian spy up near the border.

CONDOLEEZZA

What spy?

CHENEY

According to our operative in Saskatoon, a Canadian agent made it across the border. (to ZEKE) And you ID'ed her?

ZEKE

Yes, sir.

CHENEY

Wonderful work. Now get the hell out.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 & ZEKE

Sir!

H.S.S. OFFICER 1 and ZEKE exit.

CONDOLEEZZA

A spy... how sexy! Tell me more...

CHENEY

(reading)

On the trail of the leaf no doubt. Get this - she's a Mountie named... Veronique Du Bois.

CONDOLEEZZA has a huge reaction to the name.

CONDOLEEZZA

Veronique?

CHENEY
Of the Mounties! Ha! I wonder if she always gets her man.

CONDOLEEZZA snatches report from CHENEY.

CONDOLEEZZA
Let me see that!
(reads)
Veronique...Du Bois!
CONDOLEEZZA is visibly stunned.

CHENEY
Probably has a big St. Bernard. Ooh, I'm so-o scared. Canadians.

CHENEY notices that CONDOLEEZZA isn't sharing his joyous disdain.

CHENEY
Condi, what's wrong?

CONDOLEEZZA
Ah..uh...low blood sugar. I..uh..forgot to eat breakfast.

CHENEY
No problem. Let me check my desk.I think I've got a - (suggestively) Power Bar...

CONDOLEEZZA
Not now Dick.

Deflated, CHENEY exits.

CONDOLEEZZA
Veronique Du Bois? Could it be? Is it possible? All these years... That she is my... That I am her... That we are... I've got to find her before the H.S.S. But how?

ZEKE enters with another memo.

ZEKE
Excuse me, ma'am, sir. I've got an update on that Mountie.

CONDOLEEZZA snatches the memo from his hand.

ZEKE
She's been spotted up around Leech Lake. It's not going to be easy to find her up there.

CONDOLEEZZA
(to ZEKE)
You know the area?

ZEKE
Every gopher hole by name.

CONDOLEEZZA
Excellent. Recruit, I have a special secret assignment for you...

ZEKE
Wow!

CONDOLEEZZA
So secret you mustn't tell anyone - not even your superiors at Homeland Security.

ZEKE
Why not?!

CONDOLEEZZA
Shhh! Canadian agents have infiltrated our whole government, like Communists, only better dressed.

ZEKE
(loudly)
GEE -

CONDOLEEZZA
SHHHH!

ZEKE
(whispered)
-whiz!

CONDOLEEZZA
Your on my team now. You must report only to me.

CONDOLEEZZA exits. ZEKE is thrilled.

ZEKE
This is gonna be swell!

Song: "I'M ON THE TEAM"

ZEKE

I'M ON THE TEAM AND I'M PROUD OF IT!

I'M ON THE TEAM AND OOOH, I LOVE IT!

IF YOU'RE NOT ON THE TEAM, YOU CAN SHOVE IT!

I'M ON THE TEAM!

IF IT'S GOT TO BE DONE, I'LL DO IT!

IF THE GOING GETS TOUGH I'LL PUSH ON

THROUGH IT!

WRONG OR RIGHT, I'M A TEAM PLAYER,
MORNING AND NIGHT I'M AN ENEMY SLAYER!

I SAW THOSE DEMONSTRATORS ON TV
THEY WERE MARCHING ROUND,
MAN, IT GOT TO ME.
I TELL YOU THOSE PEOPLE, THEY ARE WAY
OFF THE BEAM,
PEOPLE LIKE THAT THEY ARE
NOT ON THE TEAM!

WE OUGHT TO SEND THEM BACK TO SOMEWHERE,
OR LOCK THEM UP IN JAIL, I DON'T CARE!
WRONG OR RIGHT, I'M A TEAM PLAYER,
MORNING AND NIGHT, I'M AN ENEMY SLAYER!

I'M ON THE TEAM AND I'M PROUD OF IT!

I'M ON THE TEAM AND I LOVE IT

IF YOU'RE NOT ON THE TEAM, YOU CAN SHOVE IT!

I'M ON THE TEAM!

ZEKE exits.

Conrad Cimarra as ZEKE Photo by Neil Miller

SCENE 5

IN THE WOODS

DOROTHEA enters hiding behind a bush she is carrying along for cover.. Helicopters can be heard circling overhead.

DOROTHEA
(whispered)
Veronique! Veronique?

VERONIQUE enters, also carrying a bush for camouflage.

VERONIQUE
(whispered)
Dorothea?

DOROTHEA
That's the third H.S.S. helicopter in an hour.

VERONIQUE
We should be close to the highway by now. We're going to have to get a ride... steal a car... something...every hour we lose, the further into Canada the invasion gets.

DOROTHEA
Be very careful, you don't know the H.S.S., they're everywhere...

The sound of children singing is heard from off stage.

VERONIQUE
What's that?

DOROTHEA
It sounds like... Quick, hide!

DOROTHEA and VERONIQUE hide behind their bushes as two KIDS enter. Each is cheerfully marching along, carrying a rifle.

KIDS

WE'RE GOD'S LITTLE WARRIORS,

WE'RE THE SOLDIERS OF THE LORD,

FOR JESUS AND AMERICA,

WE'RE MARCHING OFF TO WAR!

REVEREND
(from offstage)
Hey kids!

The KIDS start joyfully yet seriously shooting their rifles back in the direction they came from. VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA shake behind their bush cover. REVEREND TEUFUL enters. He is straightforwardly cheerful, and is carrying a rifle and a bullet-riddled target in the shape of Satan.

KID 1
(pointing at the target)
I got Lucifer in the eye!

KID 2
Oh yeah? I bet I blew his brains out.

KID 1
Did not!

KID 2
Did too!

REVEREND
Excellent shooting! I think you both blew out Lucifer's brains! That's enough practice for now! Let's clean those guns and get back in the van.

VERONIQUE
Armed evangelists? What is wrong with you people?

DOROTHEA
Shhhh!

REVEREND
We don't want to waste any more ammunition before we get to the Lambs of Jesus Small Arms Jamboree!

KID 1
Where's the jamboree this year, daddy?

REVEREND
Rapid City, South Dakota!

VERONIQUE
I've got an idea!

VERONIQUE leads DOROTHEA offstage as the REVEREND joyfully talks to the KIDS.

REVEREND
Do you kids realize how lucky you are to be alive to see the Rapture? To see the End Of Days? All this war and suffering can only mean one thing... that Jesus is coming soon!

KIDS
Yay!

REVEREND

Only when everything is darkest, when all hope is lost will He return! Have both you children lost all hope?

KIDS

Yes, daddy!

REVEREND

Lord be praised!

Song: "GOD'S LITTLE WARRIORS"

REVEREND

THE END OF MAN IS FAST APPROACHIN',

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ARE THE

WAGES OF SIN.

SO GIT RIGHT WITH JESUS,

AND WEAR YOUR DARK GLASSES

YOU'LL NEED 'EM TO WATCH THAT OL'

APOCALYPSE BEGIN!

REVEREND

So praise the Lord!

All

SO PRAISE THE LORD FER PLAGUE 'N FAMINE!

FOR EV'RY CRIMINAL AND PERVERT GIVE A CHEER,

FOR EV'RY WAR 'N BIG DISASTER

IS A SIGN THAT THE LORD IS DRAWING NEAR!

REVEREND

God's little warriors!

KIDS

WE'RE GOD'S LITTLE WARRIORS

WE'RE THE SOLDIERS OF THE LORD

FOR JESUS AND AMERICA

WE'RE MARCHING OFF TO WAR!

Enter VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA, now in disguise.. VERONIQUE has reconfigured her Mountie uniform into a ministers outfit., but is still wearing her Mountie hat. DOROTHEA now looks the proper minister's wife. The two women enthusiastically join in the singing.

VERONIQUE AND DOROTHEA

SO PRAISE THE LORD FER PLAGUE 'N FAMINE,

FER EV'RY CRIMINAL 'N PERVERT GIVE A CHEER,

ALL

FOR EV'RY WAR 'N BIG DISASTER

IS A SIGN THAT THE LORD IS DRAWING NEAR!

VERONIQUE AND DOROTHEA

Praise the Lord!

REVEREND & KIDS

Praise the Lord!

VERONIQUE

(with a southern accent, and the cadence of a preacher)

It was a miracle! I am Brother Sunshine of the National Association of Homophobic Black Churches and this is my wife, Sister Luna, from Confucians For Christ, and I say again, it was a miracle! We were driving along the road, playing Bible car games, when suddenly Satan sent the car over a cliff where it exploded on impact.

Michael Carreiro as REVEREND, Christian Cagigal as KID 1, Bekka Fink as KID 2
Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

KID 1
(pointing at VERONIQUE)
He exploded!

VERONIQUE
Yet we both walked away without a scratch!

REVEREND & KIDS
Praise the Lord!

VERONIQUE
And now to find some of our own people right here! And though we have no way to continue our journey to the Lambs of Jesus Small Arms Jamboree - where we will be judging the shooting - I know the Lord will re-arm us and get us to our destination.

REVEREND
It is a miracle!

KIDS
Praise the Lord!

REVEREND
We are going to the Jamboree ourselves! And we will be pleased to help you journey on your way.

DOROTHEA
Praise the Lord!

VERONIQUE
You're sure it's not too much trouble?

REVEREND
Lord, no! Besides, there are reports that this area has been infiltrated by cowardly terrorists from Canada!

VERONIQUE winces because again, as the Americans insult Canada..

KID 2
If we see any Canadians, can we shoot 'em down...

KID 1
Like dogs?

REVEREND
If you do see any - don't aim for the heart - Canadians don't have one!

VERONIQUE is wincing like a its her job..

REVEREND
Isn't that right, Brother Sunshine?

VERONIQUE can take no more.

VERONIQUE
OH, LIKE THIS COUNTRY HAS A HEART?

DOROTHEA sees that VERONIQUE is losing her cool.

DOROTHEA
Husband -

VERONIQUE
You have more homeless than the whole population of Quebec, but you spend all your money on missiles and frappuccinos!

REVEREND
Frapa-who-nos?

VERONIQUE
Maybe if you spent more time taking care of people instead of jailing or executing them you Americans would have a decent country!

REVEREND & KIDS
You Americans?

VERONIQUE
I mean... we'd have a decent country...

The REVEREND and KIDS are very suspicious.

KID 1
Daddy, I smell something...

REVEREND
Smells like... old, wet hippies!

REVEREND and KIDS turn with guns on VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA, who quickly points in the distance.

DOROTHEA
Look! it's Jesus!

REVEREND and the KIDS turn and look for Jesus, rapturously distracted, as VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA make a break for it.

VERONIQUE
Get in the van!

VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA exit.The REVEREND notices too late.

REVEREND

Hold it! Come on, kids!

REVEREND and KIDS chase after VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA.

ON TELEVISION

A PRESS CONFERENCE.

CHENEY enters, is behind a podium, answering questions to unseen reporters..

CHENEY

Ladies and Gentleman, one at a time! The question was about Canada's oil. America has no interest in Canada's vast oil reserves, or her timber, or her wealth of fresh, unpolluted water. We are just interested in freeing the Canadian people from the grip of socialized medicine, free public education, and a perverted government that allows dope smoking homosexuals into the sanctity of marriage. Of course after the war we will have to utilize Canada's oil, timber, and water wealth to pay for re-building her infrastructure - and for this solemn mission the corporations that will help Canada exploit these resources are -

CHENEY pulls out a list to read as he and podium exit.

SCENE 6

ON THE ROAD.

DOROTHEA and VERONIQUE enter in front of a cut-out of the interior of the stolen van (which is being manipulated from behind by an actor) VERONIQUE has a steering wheel. Exciting chase music plays as they make their getaway as all the vehicles move about the stage.

VERONIQUE
Do you see anybody?

DOROTHEA looks back, then shakes her head.

DOROTHEA
What is wrong with you?

VERONIQUE
Oh, gosh. I'm sorry. Sometimes I get my hackles up.

DOROTHEA
You have something against white people?

VERONIQUE
No, I dislike all Americans equally. Wait! I think we're being followed!

ZEKE enters driving car (a cut-out strapped to his back. In one hand he has a steering wheel, the other a phone).

ZEKE
(on phone)
Nothing much on the road...just a church van. Sure, Ms. Rice, I'll check it out...

ZEKE pulls up to the driver's side of the van. DOROTHEA sees ZEKE on phone, but does not recognize him.

DOROTHEA
I hate people who talk on the phone when they drive.

ZEKE and VERONIQUE see each other.

VERONIQUE
Isn't that the guy from the bar?

DOROTHEA
Zeke!

VERONIQUE
Hold on!

VERONIQUE hits the gas, and she and DOROTHEA pull away. ZEKE's car falls behind.

ZEKE
(on phone)
I think that's her, Miss Rice! And that kinda looks like ... Okay, I'll get as close as I can.

Enter H.S.S. OFFICER 2 on motorcycle (handlebars and a headlight).

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as DOROTHEA, Velina Brown as VERONIQUE,
Christian Cagigal as H.S.S. OFFICER 2, Conrad Cimarra as ZEKE
Photo by Neil Miller

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
(on radio)
I'm on Highway 12. Looks clear.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 notices fellow H.S.S. ZEKE, and pulls his motorcycle alongside ZEKE's car.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
(friendly)
Hey!

ZEKE
(remembering that CONDOLEEZZA told him his mission was secret, even from the H.S.S.)
H.S.S.!

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
How's it goin'?

ZEKE
(trying to act cool)
I'm okay...

ZEKE, speeds away for the motorcycle.

ZEKE
(on phone)
What? Ya, I got it.

ZEKE reaches into shoulder bag, pulls out a classic melodrama bomb.

ZEKE
(on phone)
You sure? Yes, ma'am!

ZEKE hangs up phone, as H.S.S. OFFICER 2 pulls up next to ZEKE again.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
(friendly)
Hey, I've got some Krispy Kremes in my saddlebag!

ZEKE pulls away again, leaving H.S.S. OFFICER 2 in the dust. H.S.S. OFFICER 2 exits.

ZEKE
God bless -

ZEKE attempts to toss the bomb into VERONIQUE's van while steering but losses control, and his car crashes into the side of the van and he's forced away. He tries again.

ZEKE

God bless A...

Again ZEKE cannot drive and throw, and his car again crashes into the side of the van, bouncing away. He tries again.

ZEKE

God bless America!

This time ZEKE succeeds at tossing the bomb. VERONIQUE, catches it, and tosses it to DOROTHEA, who tosses it out her window. There is an explosion, and both vehicles are blown offstage. ZEKE enters, dazed.

ZEKE

Where'd she go?!

ZEKE exits, and VERONIQUE enters, looking for DOROTHEA. Unseen H.S.S. OFFICER 2 has also entered eating on of his Krispy Kremes.

VERONIQUE

Dorothea, Doro... Oh jeez. All this violence. This would never happen in Saskatchewan!

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 overhears VERONIQUE.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Saskatchewan?

H.S.S. OFFICER quickly eats his donut, pulls his gun, points gun at VERONIQUE.

Freeze!

VERONIQUE

(trying to recover)

I'm Brother Sunshine and I say...

H.S.S. OFFICER 2

Silence! Filthy Canuck! You are under arrest!

VERONIQUE

Oh, jeez.

VERONIQUE puts her hands up, as the scenery changes around them.

SCENE 7

A HOLDING CELL AT H.S.S. HEADQUARTERS

VERONIQUE and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 are now inside H.S.S. Headquarters. In the corner of the cell is a sleeping figure.

VERONIQUE
I have nothing to say to you.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
Maybe not to me, but an agent is coming to transport you from here to H.S.S.H.Q. for interrogation!

H.S.S. OFFICER 2 attempts an evil laugh, fails, exits.

VERONIQUE
I can't take the chance they'll make me talk...

The sleeping figure wakes up, revealing himself to be HARRY.

HARRY
I need a drink...

VERONIQUE
Harry?

HARRY
Hey! If it isn't the war hero! You missed lunch. I don't know what it is, but at least I didn't have to pull it out of a dumpster. What're you doing here?

VERONIQUE
Oh, I might as well tell you, it doesn't matter now. I'm from a "hostile, terrorist sanctuary."

HARRY
Hollywood?

VERONIQUE
Canada.

HARRY
So, you're the spy! The infiltrator, the saboteur -

VERONIQUE
I'm just a Mountie! My mission was to stop the war peacefully, before it really got started.

HARRY
Don't worry, kid. Couple of weeks this thing will be over, and Canada will be our best friend again - the newest trophy in America's list of liberated nations.

VERONIQUE winces.

VERONIQUE
WHAT DO AMERICANS KNOW ABOUT LIBERTY? You've turned your country into everything you say you hate... Phoney elections, huge mansions surrounded with poverty, secret police... you're just a banana republic - and you don't even have bananas!

HARRY
Hey, that's my country you're talking about...

VERONIQUE
Exactly! Your country! You made it like this!

HARRY
We didn't make it! We.. let it happen. Slowly, bit by bit.

VERONIQUE
Why?

HARRY
They say if you drop a frog in boiling water it'll jump right out, but if you put it in cool water, and slowly turn up the heat, the frog will keep adjusting itself until it gets boiled to death.

VERONIQUE
So... America is a boiled frog?

HARRY
A whole nation of boiled frogs. In the name of unity, national defense, and the War on Terror we adjusted 'till the water boiled around us. Now all I get is to live in my van on the street or this cell with a bunch of other beaten, old vets. Maybe I shoulda gone AWOL, done some coke, saved my ass, maybe I wouldn't be here... maybe I'd be in the White House.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2, and ZEKE enter.

ZEKE
(to VERONIQUE, doing his best to be officiously imposing)
So, we meet again!

HARRY
Zeke...

ZEKE
(casually)
Hi Harry. (shocked) Harry?!

HARRY
Is that you?

ZEKE

(reasserting his officiousness)

Silence! I ask the questions here!

VERONIQUE

You will never make me talk!

ZEKE

We shall see. I shall take the prisoner with me immediately.

HARRY

Don't do this, Zeke! I've known you since you were this high! You're not like this...

ZEKE

Silence, Harry!

(to H.S.S. Officer 2)

Prepare my car!

ZEKE and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 exit.

HARRY

Damn, what's the point? Nothing's gonna change. Who do these people think they are?

In a moment of quiet VERONIQUE takes off her mountie hat, opens a secret compartment, and pulls out a small box. Out of the small box she pulls a large, ugly pill. Defeated, VERONIQUE his only one option...

Song: "CANADA, ADIEU"

VERONIQUE

THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO THINK

THE WORLD IS THEIRS TO DO WITH AS THEY PLEASE.

WHO GAVE THEM THE RIGHT TO GO AROUND

PICKING FIGHTS,

AND TRY TO BRING THE WORLD TO ITS KNEES?

THE BITTER TASTE OF MY DEFEAT,

THE TASTE OF FAILURE SO COMPLETE,

IS MORE THAN I CAN BARE!

I THREW THE DICE, THEY CAME UP SEVENS,
IF THERE'S A GOD, IF I GET TO HEAVEN,
AT LEAST I WILL SEE NO AMERICANS THERE!

A FOND FAREWELL TO ALL OF YOU,
AND TO CANADA I BID ADIEU!

GOODBYE NATIONAL HEALTH AND
SHARING THE WEALTH,
GOODBYE TO A SOCIETY THAT CARES.
GOODBYE FRIENDS AND FAMILY I WILL NOT SEE!
GOODBYE TO A FUTURE THAT WILL NEVER BE!

A FOND FAREWELL TO ALL OF YOU,
AND TO CANADA I BID ADIEU!

I KNEW THAT ONE DAY
I WOULD HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE.
I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD COME SO SOON.

BUT PLEASE, NO NEED TO CRY,
ITS LIFE, ALL THINGS MUST DIE,
I'LL BE SPARED THE COMING DARKNESS AT NOON!

I THREW THE DICE, THEY CAME UP SEVENS
IF THERE'S A GOD, IF I GET TO HEAVEN
AT LEAST I WILL SEE NO AMERICANS THERE!

A FOND FAREWELL TO ALL OF YOU,

AND TO CANADA I BID ADIEU!

VERONIQUE holds up The Pill.

HARRY

What's that?

VERONIQUE

The L Pill... I never thought I'd have to take this. Well, goodbye, Canada!

VERONIQUE grimly puts The Pill in her mouth, prepares top swallow.

HARRY

So you're just giving up?

Compelled by her sense of Canadian politeness to answer, and not talk with her mouth full, VERONIQUE takes The Pill out of her mouth.

VERONIQUE

I've failed in my mission. Goodbye, Canada...

VERONIQUE grimly puts The Pill back in her mouth, prepares top swallow again.

HARRY

At least you have a mission! If I had a mission, something I could do to help, I wouldn't give up so easily.

VERONIQUE again takes The Pill out of her mouth to answer..

VERONIQUE

I'm locked up, about to be interrogated! What am I supposed to do?

HARRY

Something will come up.

VERONIQUE again, fatally grimly, puts The Pill in her mouth. But before she can swallow a part of the cell begins to shake, shift, and pops open, revealing DOROTHEA, wearing a miner's lantern hat.

DOROTHEA

Veronique?

HARRY

Dot!

DOROTHEA

Harry?

HARRY

Told ya.

VERONIQUE tries to talk, but has The Pill in her mouth. She spits it out.

VERONIQUE
Dorothea? You're alive!

DOROTHEA
They'll be back any minute!

VERONIQUE
How did you find that tunnel?

DOROTHEA pulls out her big book again.

DOROTHEA
Appendixes! Come on! We've got to get to Rapid City!

VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA begin to crawl out the hole in the wall.

HARRY
Rapid City. Last job I got fired from was outside of Rapid City, at an undisclosed location.

VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA stop.

VERONIQUE AND DOROTHEA
What?

HARRY
I was a security guard. Got to drinking, answered the phone and I almost disclosed the location.

VERONIQUE
Where is it?

HARRY
Mount Rushmore, inside Teddy Roosevelt's head.

VERONIQUE & DOROTHEA
Of course!

VERONIQUE exits. HARRY hangs back.

DOROTHEA
We don't have much time. Harry, let's go!

HARRY
It's too cold outside for an old guy like me.

DOROTHEA
Could you just hold them off until we get away?

HARRY
(excited to have a mission)
Now that I can do!

DOROTHEA
I'll see you back at the bar sometime.

HARRY
Drinks better be on the house!

DOROTHEA exits.

HARRY
Got me a mission!

ZEKE and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 re-enter. HARRY is sitting in front of the hole in the wall.

ZEKE
So, prisoner, if you will come this way...
(gasps)
Where is she?

HARRY
Beats me. Tough day huh, Zeke? Don't forget to wake me for dinner... it's meatloaf night.

HARRY down to sleep in front of hole.

H.S.S. OFFICER 2
Sound the alarm!

ZEKE
No! I know exactly were she's going. I will find her. Myself...

ZEKE and H.S.S. OFFICER 2 exits.

SCENE 8

IN THE UNDISCLOSED LOCATION: THE INSIDE OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S HEAD AT MOUNT RUSHMORE.

Upstage is the inside of a Roosevelt's massive eye., with an opening at the iris. There is a tv screen/drop flap on the wall. There are two televisions on the wall. On the TV is WOLF KREIGER, a stern, business-like reporter,

WOLF
This is Wolf Kreiger, SNN, here in Canada, as Ottawa is encircled in the vice-like grip of liberation. Sources say that here, at last, the fearsome Parliamentary Guard will make a desperate last stand to defend the evil heart of this evil regime. But when they are defeated, and when this war of liberation is finally over, the real question will be: will our President once again be denied the Nobel Peace Prize? Only a repressive Norwegian government could do such a thing, a regime so oppressive in its repressiveness...

The CHENEY and H.S.S. OFFICER 1 enter. H.S.S. OFFICER 1 turns off TV manually. CHENEY is wearing a smoking jacket, and is in an excited, romantic mood..

CHENEY
Is everything prepared?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
Yes, sir.

CHENEY
Champagne chilled?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
Yes, sir.

CHENEY
Waterbed filled?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
Yes, sir.

CHENEY
Wonderful! When Condi... Ms. Rice arrives I want everything inside this head to say love!

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
Sir, I also have the contracts.

CHENEY
What contracts?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
For the re-building of Canada.

CHENEY

Oh, yes, yes...

CONDOLEEZZA enters.

CONDOLEEZZA

Mr. Vice President...

CHENEY

My dear Ms. Rice, how wonderful to see you.

CONDOLEEZZA

I'm glad we could meet on such short notice. I love what you've done with your head.

CHENEY

Wait 'till next year... I'm installing an indoor pool.

CONDOLEEZZA

Where?

CHENEY

We're expanding into Jefferson.

CONDOLEEZZA

(trying to seem nonchalant)

I was wondering... have you heard anything else about that spy?

CHENEY

The Canadian? Picked her up this morning.

Music as CONDOLEEZZA reacts with dramatic concern.

CHENEY

H.S.S. should be questioning her about now -

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

I'm sorry, Sir, but the Canadian agent is no longer in H.S.S. custody...

CHENEY

(taken aback)

What?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Apparently she escaped this morning.

CONDOLEEZZA

(relieved)

Thank God!

CHENEY & h.S.S. OFFICER 1

What?

CONDOLEEZZA

(covering)

Thank God.... H.S.S. is on the trail! I'm sure you'll catch her soon.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Yes, ma'am! There's a report she's been spotted not far from here!

Music as CONDOLEEZZA is racked with dramatic fear.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

We have a thousand agents combing the area for her.

CONDOLEEZZA

Dick...I... have to go...

CHENEY

But...

CONDOLEEZZA

I ...have a headache!

CHENEY

Already?

CONDOLEEZZA hurriedly exits.

CHENEY

(dejected)

Damn! Oh well. Drain my waterbed ..

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

(into headset)

Drain the Vice President's bed...

CHENEY

And prepare my plane. I'm going back to Washington.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

But Mr. Vice President, you still have to sign these contracts.

CHENEY

What... that's it! The contracts to rebuild Canada! Haliburton, Exxon, Bechtel...wait'll Condi sees these! Nothing puts a woman more in the mood than billion dollar construction contracts!

CHENEY laughs, joined awkwardly by OFFICER 1.

ChENEY

Re-fill my waterbed!

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

(into headset)

Re-fill the Vice President's waterbed.

CHENEY and H.S.S. OFFICER exit. After a moment two heads appear through the iris of the eye - VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA.

VERONIQUE

This is it!

They climb in.

VERONIQUE

Where is the leaf?

DOROTHEA checks her book.

DOROTHEA

It doesn't say! They must have built the hiding place after the book was printed. It's probably electronic. Look for a controller.

VERONIQUE finds a remote.

VERONIQUE

What's this?

VERONIQUE presses a button, and the tv starts up. WOLF appears in tv / drop flap.

WOLF

(on tv)

...And so begins the last stage of Operation Frozen Freedom!

VERONIQUE

Oh no!

WOLF

So far in this war casualties have been remarkably light, but this battle should prove to be extremely bloody - at least for the Canadians.

VERONIQUE turns the tv off. Drop flap closes.

VERONIQUE

We've got to find the Leaf right away! Once it's back in Canadian hands all this will end!

DOROTHEA

I'll look near the ear!

VERONIQUE

I'll check in the neck!

VERONIQUE exits, and DOROTHEA examines the inside of the cranium. Suddenly she hears someone coming, and hides. CHENEY enters.

CHENEY
Condi? Where is that woman?

A head appears in the iris. It is ZEKE, and he having trouble climbing.

ZEKE
Help!

CHENEY
What the heck is that?

CHENEY looks at him, and disdainfully snaps his fingers. OFFICER 1 enters, and helps ZEKE in through the iris..

CHENEY
What are you doing! Someone could see you climbing in here!

ZEKE
Sir, I was chasing the -

ZEKE cuts himself off, remembering what CONDOLEEZZA said about secrecy.

CHENEY
The what?

ZEKE
The ... nothing.

CHENEY
I don't want you playing around in my head!

CHENEY resumes his romantic search for CONDOLEEZZA.

CHENEY
Condi!

CHENEY exits.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
(to ZEKE)
And I had such high hopes for you.

OFFICER 1 leaves.

ZEKE
Aw, man!

CONDOLEEZZA enters.

CONDOLEEZZA
She escaped? Where is she?

ZEKE
Ms. Rice, ma'am! I tracked her here! She's somewhere inside Roosevelt!

CONDOLEEZZA
Find her! Or you will be sent to the Camps for aiding a terrorist spy!

CONDOLEEZZA exits.

ZEKE
This sucks.

ZEKE exits. DOROTHEA comes out from her hiding place.

DOROTHEA
It's amazing! How could I have missed the resemblance! It's like they are... that she and her... I've got an idea! I've got to find Veronique!

DOROTHEA exits. H.S.S. OFFICER 1 and CHENEY enter.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
Ms. National Security Advisor... Ms. National Security Advisor -

CHENEY
Have you found her?

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
I can't find her anywhere, sir. It seems Ms. Rice is no longer in your head.

CHENEY
Oh, well. Ready my plane, drain my bed.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1
(into headset)
Drain the Vice President's water bed!

VERONIQUE enters. She has reconfigured her Mountie uniform again, this time to resemble the dress CONDOLEEZZA was last wearing. She is still wearing her Mountie hat.

VERONIQUE
(pretending to be CONDOLEEZZA)
Mr. Vice President?

CHENEY
Condi! (to OFFICER 1) Cancel my plane, plug my bed.

OFFICER 1 exits. CHENEY turns to VERONIQUE with romantic intentions.

CHENEY
Condi, my dear... We're all alone. We don't have to be so formal.

VERONIQUE
We don't?

CHENEY
Here in my head we can do whatever we want!

VERONIQUE
We can? Well, considering all that's going on, I... want to see it!

CHENEY
At last!

CHENEY begins to unbuckle his pants.

VERONIQUE
No! I mean the Leaf!

CHENEY
Oh. Alright.

CHENEY pulls out a remote, pushes a few buttons, a panel in the wall opens, revealing the Leaf.

CHENEY
Canada... millions of acres of pristine old growth forests from Vancouver to Hudson Bay, more oil than Alaska, and shimmering glaciers full of fresh water!

VERONIQUE
It's a beautiful country.

CHENEY
In ten years it will be strip mined, piped line and clear cut... hey! It'll look like Iraq!

VERONIQUE
Perhaps I should take the Leaf for safe keeping...

CHENEY
Don't be silly. It couldn't be safer than it is right now.

CHENEY pokes buttons on the remote, closing the panel. He puts the remote in his pocket.

CHENEY
So, Condi...

VERONIQUE
Mr. -

CHENEY

Dick...

VERONIQUE

Yes. Mister Dick. Perhaps there is somewhere more intimate we can talk...

Velina Brown as VERONIQUE, Ed Holmes as DICK CHENEY
Photo by Neil Miller

CHENEY

Oh yes! I have just the spot! I'll make sure it's ready.

CHENEY exits, DOROTHEA enters.

DOROTHEA
Did you get it?

VERONIQUE
It's in here! But he has the control to open it in his pocket.

DOROTHEA
You're going to have to go in there and get it.

VERONIQUE
(disgusted)
Oh, well. For Canada.

VERONIQUE exits. Sound of someone approaching, and DOROTHEA hides again. ZEKE enters.

ZEKE
Strange...I thought for sure I heard that spy's voice in here...

DOROTHEA
Zeke!

ZEKE
Dot!

BOTH
What are you doing here? Shhh!

ZEKE
You gotta leave! If they find you in here you'll go straight to the Camps!

DOROTHEA
I'm not going anywhere! I'm here to try and stop our invasion of Canada...!

ZEKE
Don't you mean our liberation of Canada, Dot?!

DOROTHEA
You can help me!

ZEKE
Why would I want to do that?

DOROTHEA
So we can focus on fixing what's wrong with America!

ZEKE
What's wrong with America?

It dawns on ZEKE that DOROTHEA might not be on his side.

ZEKE

Oh my God!

DOROTHEA

Shhhh!

CONDOLEEZZA enters.

CONDOLEEZZA

What are you doing here?

ZEKE, seeing CONDOLEEZZA, mistakes her for VERONIQUE.

ZEKE

There you are! Gotcha!

ZEKE grabs CONDOLEEZZA.

CONDOLEEZZA

Get your hands off of me, you idiot!

DOROTHEA also mistakes CONDOLEEZZA for VERONIQUE.

DOROTHEA

You got the controller already?

CONDOLEEZZA

What controller?

DOROTHEA

To the safe.

CONDOLEEZZA

Who are you?

ZEKE

She's -

DOROTHEA realizes her mistake, tries to stop ZEKE.

DOROTHEA

Zeke!

CONDOLEEZZA

Who?

DOROTHEA

No!

ZEKE

She's...

ZEKE is torn about turning in his friend, but decides to be a patriot.

ZEKE
A traitor working with the Canadian spy!

CONDOLEEZZA
So!

Velina Brown as CONDOLEEZZA RICE Photo by Neil Miller

CONDOLEEZZA pulls out a gun, and points it at DOROTHEA.

CONDOLEEZZA
(to ZEKE)
Go find the other one!

ZEKE
Yes, Ma'am!

ZEKE exits.

DOROTHEA

What are you going to do?

CONDOLEEZZA

Take care of you and your friend so that I can get on with my life!

DOROTHEA

What about the Leaf?

CONDOLEEZZA

Screw the Leaf! This is about my future!

DOROTHEA

What does this have to do with you future?

CONDOLEEZZA

Since you are going to die anyway, I might as well tell you. Veronique Du Bois is my twin... cousin! My uncle Hugo was a Vietnam vet, but in his second tour of duty he turned coward and ran off to Canada. He got married, had a daughter. Then one day he comes waltzing back down to Birmingham like all is forgiven just cuz he's dying... So we turned the him in.

DOROTHEA

So that's why she hates America...

CONDOLEEZZA

His wife takes their daughter back north... changes their name...

DOROTHEA

To Du Bois!

CONDOLEEZZA

And he dies in prison like the traitor he was! I forgot all about the Du Bois'... Until now!

DOROTHEA

But why kill her?

CONDOLEEZZA

A superior person does not lose everything she's worked for - money, power, Cheney/Rice 2008 - because of some traitor uncle, a Canadian Janie-do-right... or you!

CONDOLEEZZA prepares to shoot DOROTHEA, but just then ZEKE enters.

DOROTHEA

(thinking quickly)

Agent Du Bois! Put that gun down!

CONDOLEEZZA

What?

DOROTHEA
You may have fooled Zeke, but I won't let you kill the Vice President!

CONDOLEEZZA
Are you nuts?

ZEKE is fooled by DOROTHEA's ruse, and leaps at CONDOLEEZZA.

ZEKE
Give me that gun, you filthy spy!

ZEKE grabs the gun in CONDOLEEZZA's hand. They struggle.

CONDOLEEZZA
You fool, it's me!

DOROTHEA
Veronique, it's no use!

CONDOLEEZZA
Shut up!

ZEKE
Canadian scum!

CONDOLEEZZA
You idiot!

ZEKE
Come back here!

ZEKE and CONDOLEEZZA fight all the way out through Roosevelt's iris.. CHENEY enters, and DOROTHEA quickly exits.

CHENEY
Condi... Condi, honey!

Screams are heard as someone falls to their death from the face of Roosevelt..

CHENEY
What was that?

ZEKE desperately reaches in through the iris.

ZEKE
Help!

CHENEY at ZEKE pitifully holding on for dear life, snaps fingers, and H.S.S. OFFICER 1 enters and helps ZEKE in through eye again.

CHENEY
What is wrong with you?

ZEKE
I was just chasing the -

Remembering his promise of secrecy again.

CHENEY
The what?

ZEKE
The nothing.

CHENEY
If I catch you on my face again I'll put you in the camps!

ZEKE and H.S.S. exit as VERONIQUE, still disguised as CONDOLEEZZA enters. VERONIQUE is trying her best to vamp CHENEY.

VERONIQUE
There you are!

CHENEY
Condi!

VERONIQUE
Dick, I can't wait another minute!

CHENEY
Neither can I!

They clinch. As VERONIQUE kisses a thrilled and aroused CHENEY she runs her hands over him trying to find the right pocket with the remote. Finally finding it she picks his pocket and gets the remote. CHENEY swoons with love, as VERONIQUE hits a button on the controller. But instead of the Leaf appearing, the tv comes on/flap opens.

WOLF
(on tv)
I can hear our planes overhead... And as I look at the massive buildup around me -

VERONIQUE hits another button and the Leaf appears.

WOLF
I can't help but think...

VERONIQUE, still holding CHENEY, takes the Leaf in her hands. Once the Leaf is in VERONIQUE's hand WOLF's entire demeanor, and he loses all belligerence.

WOLF
(peacefully)
Why is America invading Canada?

CHENEY notices the change in the broadcast.

CHENEY
What?

WOLF
It's cold up here!

CHENEY
(realizing the problem)
The Leaf!

WOLF
I can see our troops falling back -

CHENEY sees that VERONIQUE is holding the Leaf.

CHENEY
Give me that!

CHENEY takes the Leaf from VERONIQUE, and WOLF resumes his aggressive style. Each time the Leaf changes hands from CHENEY to VERONIQUE WOLF's demeanor changes accordingly.

WOLF
(belligerently)
- falling back to even stronger positions, from which they will crush any -

VERONIQUE takes Leaf back from CHENEY.

WOLF
(peacefully)
- crush any feelings of hatred toward our gentle neighbor to the north.

CHENEY takes the Leaf from VERONIQUE.

WOLF
War!

VERONIQUE takes Leaf back from CHENEY.

WOLF
Peace!

CHENEY takes the Leaf from VERONIQUE.

WOLF
War!

VERONIQUE takes Leaf back from CHENEY.

Peace!

CHENEY turns off TV.

CHENEY

Condi...what's going on?

VERONIQUE

Mr. Vice President, I have something to tell you...

CHENEY

Yes?

Before VERONIQUE can confess DOROTHEA suddenly enters.

DOROTHEA

Wait! Ms. Rice!

VERONIQUE

What?

DOROTHEA

Thank goodness I found you, Ms. Rice! I wanted to tell you that the Canadian spy... is dead!

CHENEY

Who are you?

DOROTHEA

Dorothea Whitman, librarian, bartender, Special Secret Personal Secretary to the National Security Advisor.

VERONIQUE

The spy is... dead?

CHENEY

But how?

DOROTHEA

She fell from the eye.

H.S.S. OFFICER and ZEKE enter.

H.S.S. OFFICER 1

Mr. Vice President, our troops around Ottawa are falling back!

H.S.S. OFFICER and ZEKE both turn on televisions. On one is BUFFY STERN, on the other WOLF KRIEGER

STERN

This is Buffy Stern...

WOLF
This is Wolf Krieger...

STERN
And all around us our troops are embracing our Canadian brothers...

WOLF
Two armies, fighting just moments ago, now united with a single goal...

ZEKE
(no longer filled with hatred of Canadians)
The tight leather pants of Celine Dion.

ZEKE and OFFICER turn the televisions off.

ChENEY
Well, looks like the war is over.

CHENEY notes that the LEAF is in "CONDOLEEZZA's" hands.

CHENEY
I guess your theory about the Leaf was wrong, Condi.

VERONIQUE
I guess so...

CHENEY's ardor has cooled considerable.

CHENEY
Embarrassing... for you. I was thinking, Ms. Rice, perhaps, until this all blows over, we should spend less time together. For the good of the country. After all, you have to jet around securing the nation, and I have to find a new Undisclosed Location. This one's too popular all of a sudden.

ZEKE
Hey, how about the Grand Canyon?

CHENEY
Now there's an idea! The Grand Undisclosed Location! What's your name, son?

ZEKE
Zeke, sir.

CHENEY
Well, Zeke, you keep coming up with ideas like that, stay off my face, and you might have a bright future in the H.S.S. Now outta my way!

CHENEY leaves. ZEKE turns to DOROTHEA.

ZEKE
Good to see you're on the team, Dot. (to VERONIQUE) Ms. Rice.

ZEKE exits.

VERONIQUE
Thanks, Dot! Ottawa, here I come!

DOROTHEA
You're going back?

VERONIQUE
My mission is over, and the sooner I get outta the U.S. the better.

DOROTHEA
What about the resistance?

VERONIQUE
Not my problem. But I could probably sneak you into Canada...

DOROTHEA
This is my country, darn it! And I'm gonna fight to fix it! You could help us.

VERONIQUE
How?

DOROTHEA
Well... Ms. Rice... you are the National Security Advisor! Maybe you can make Americans feel secure without having to threaten the rest of the world.

VERONIQUE
What about Canada?

DOROTHEA
It's safe... for now. But with this administration, who knows what's next?

The TV snaps on. ED HOLMES appears onscreen, is wearing a star-spangle sweater.

HOLMES
Hi folks, I'm Ed Holmes. Some of you may be wondering - why are we invading Brazil?

DOROTHEA
Please, Veronique, we need you. We've got to stop them.

The other TV snaps on, showing ZEKE in front of an American flag waving in the breeze.

Reprise: "CANADA, ADIEU"

VERONIQUE

OH JEEZ, OH NO,

PLEASE SAY IT ISN'T SO!

'CAUSE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS I SHOULD NOT GO.

HOLMES

Aren't the Brazilians our friends?

VERONIQUE, making up her mind to stay.

VERONIQUE

NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY,

I'D CHOOSE TO LIVE IN THE USA.

BUT FOR ALL OF THE DOT'S AND the HARRY'S

I'LL STAY!

AND TO CANADA I BID ADIEU,

AND SO HELLO TO ALL, TO ALL OF YOU!

VERONIQUE and DOROTHEA strike a heroic tableau.

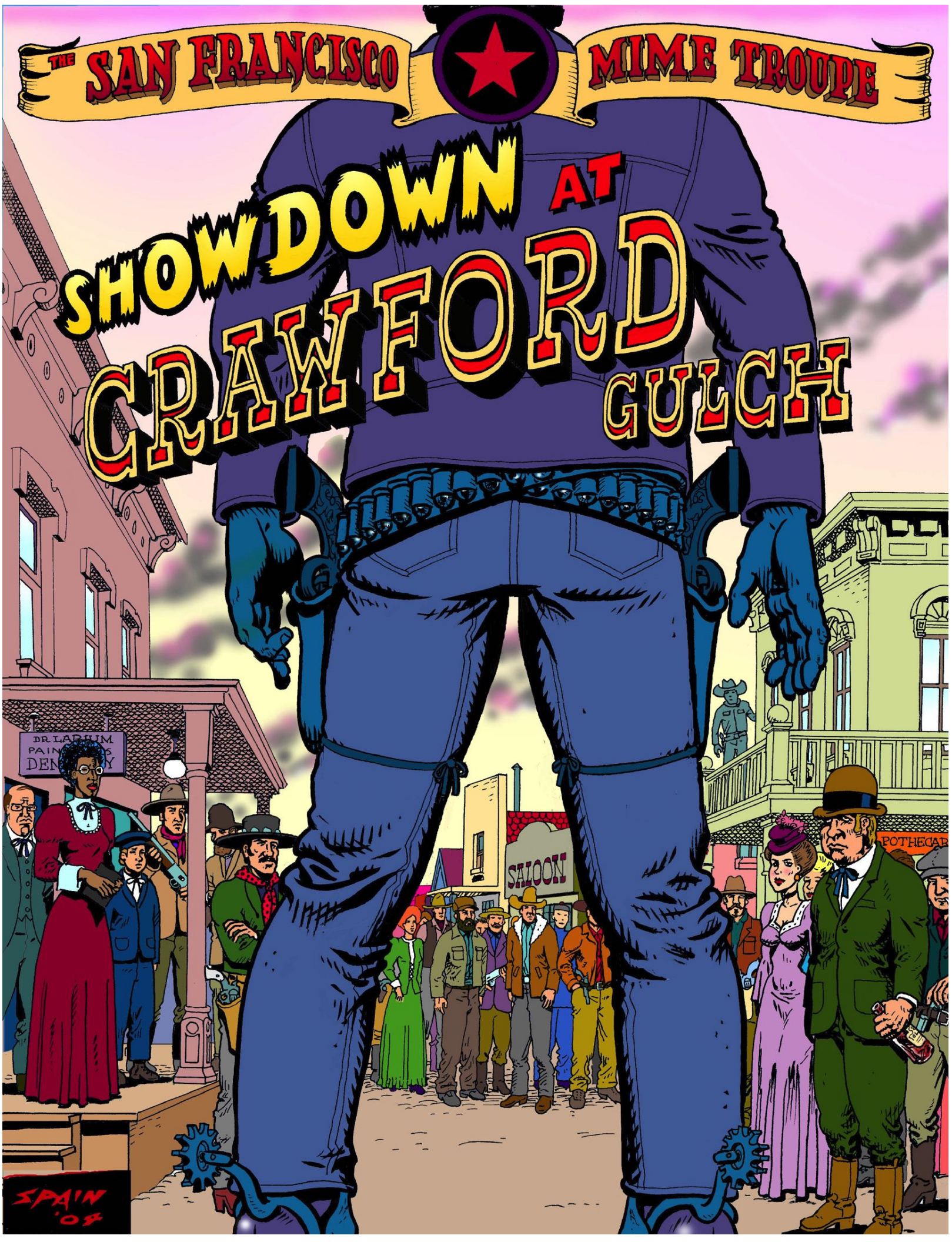
End of play

Velina Brown as VERONIQUE, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as DOROTHEA
Photo by Neil Miller

Showdown at Crawford

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan

Music and Lyrics by
Ira Marlowe, Amos Glick


THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE
SHOWDOWN AT CRAWFORD GULCH
SALOON
SPAIN '08

Exciting westerns have been a part of American mythology since the first European pioneer used a thrilling tale of heroic, heart stopping adventure to obscure the theft of the land from the people they'd murdered.

Hey, that's what happened.

SHOWDOWN AT CRAWFORD GULCH is the tale of a small western town which is suddenly menaced by hostile natives, in a fight against savages! Or are they? What if the townsfolk in the old West were subject to the same lies, manipulations, invented fear, and drumbeat to war that we are today? (They were by the way, but it sounds better as a rhetorical question.)

What if the danger and their vulnerability was heightened with propaganda and false flag events until the townsfolk were blinded by their fear? What if there were powerful financial forces using the townsfolks' demand for protection to grab the land nearby - and the resources underneath it Could be people be so terrified that they would throw away their ethics, and allow an innocent people to be pushed off their land for profit? (Again, rhetorical questions sound better.)

In the style of a spaghetti western SHOWDOWN asks: How did our water get under their desert? Or, as we say today - how did our oil get under their sand?

"Ah, the halcyon days of 2004, when rather than inciting white supremacists to violence and rattling nuclear sabers that could destroy the planet, our national leaders merely vilified brown-skinned others as terrorists and hoarders of weapons of mass destruction who must be stopped at any cost (i.e. localized war) to protect the homeland and the American way of life. (Really there were vast quantities of mineral resources and corporate wealth involved, but that was a factor the national press corps of the day was quick to overlook and slow to finally reveal.) You remember the times, the good old days.

This is the backdrop of "Crawford Gulch," set in a dusty but honest Old West, Texas town. With more than a dozen years since its initial run, the play's cast of characters – its faux-populist Mayor, who really hails from back East corporate connections, its money-bags railroad tycoon newcomer, its idealistic but inept newspaperwoman, its benighted parson, its ineffectual sheriff, its mysterious, masked crusader for justice, and its confused and compliant townsfolk – evoke far more today than the early years of the Bush II Administration.

While the world has changed since the play first premiered, the scourges of greed and bigotry – and our willingness to succumb to both, especially when egged on by mendacious civic leaders – are as menacing now as they were in 2004, that is to say, as dangerous as they are to the good people of Crawford Gulch."

Brad Erickson, Executive Director, Theatre Bay Area

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Cyrus T. Bogspavin
Bitsy La Toi
Parson Jones
The Rider
Constance Adams
Clem
Elias
Nelly
Mrs. Grey
Sheriff Frank Canem
The Mayor
Jeeves

SHOWDOWN AT CRAWFORD GULCH opened on July 4th, 2004, in Dolores Park,
San Francisco, California.

The production was directed by Keiko Shimosato Carriero, with the following cast:

Cyrus T. Bogspavin, Clem.....Amos Glick*
Bitsy La Toi, Nelly.....Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Parson Jones, Jeeves.....Michael Carriero
The Rider/Sheriff Canem ..... Michael Gene Sullivan*
Constance, Mrs. Grey.....Velina Brown*
Clem.....Victor Toman*
The Mayor……Ed Holmes*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

PROLOGUE

A CLASSIC DUSTY STREET IN A CLASSIC OLD WESTERN FRONTIER TOWN.

As if in a classic spaghetti western film - a climactic gunfight. Through doors and down the street several townsfolk - LA TOI, THE MAYOR, CONSTANCE, CLEM - enter, frightened, and scurry for cover. They peek around corners and through windows. Suddenly they freeze as a well dressed man, CYRUS T.

Amos Glick as BOGSPAVIN, Velina Brown as CONSTANCE, Victor Toman as CLEM, Michael Gene Sullivan as THE RIDER

BOGSPAVIN enters. BOGSPAVIN, laughs tauntingly at them.

BOGSPAVIN
You people don't know when you've been beaten!

LA TOI
You ain't licked us yet, Mr. Bogspavin!

The PARSON, enters running.

PARSON
He's comin'! He's comin'!

All freeze as a breeze blows across the stage. Tumbleweeds if ya got 'em. From the distance enters a masked man, the RIDER, in a long flowing duster coat. He faces off against BOGSPAVIN.

RIDER
It's time to finish this.

BOGSPAVIN
I always knew it would come to this...

RIDER
And I always knew you knew.

CONSTANCE, desperately in love, throws herself into RIDER's arms.

CONSTANCE
I just wanted you to know that I -

RIDER
I know.

CONSTANCE
But I...I -

RIDER
I know -

CONSTANCE
I -

BOGSPAVIN
He knows! I know! We all know! Just get out of the way!

RIDER
Ya'll step aside.

The RIDER waves the Townsfolk aside. Everyone except BOGSPAVIN and RIDER exits, only to peek back out through windows and door to watch the showdown.

RIDER (CONT'D)
Well, looks like it's just you and me...

Music builds, but just at the climax the music cuts, and the two gunfighters freeze. Really long pause. One of the townsfolk, CLEM (who has a guitar slung over his shoulder), cowering near a door upstage, turns to the audience.

CLEM
(to audience)
Tense, ain't it? That's just the way it was the day of the big showdown in Crawford Gulch. The two of them - eyes a blazin', fingers a twichin'... whole town quieter than one of them French mimes.

RIDER
Any time yer ready, Mr. Bogspavin...

Music builds again, cuts again as the two freeze. Another long pause.

CLEM
(to audience)
I told ya it was tense! But...

Big gust of wind blows across stage, and the Townsfolk, the RIDER and BOGSPAVIN all disappear.

CLEM
Crawford Gulch weren't always this tense. No sir! This here usta be a right friendly town, fulla hope -

SCENE 1

MAIN STREET, CRAWFORD GULCH

CLEM unslings his guitar, begins to play.

Song: "THE BALLAD OF CRAWFORD GULCH"

CLEM

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE PLACE TO

COME AND GET A BRAND NEW START.

A SIMPLE TOWN WHERE YOU WON'T GET SHOT

DOWN,

FULL OF HONEST FOLK WITH A WHOLE LOT OF

HEART!

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW,

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

CLEM (CONT'D)

Town was founded after the battle of the Gulch - last stand of the Comanche before they got moved on to the reservation, 'bout ten miles that way. (points) Town folks here mainly poor whites and exodusters - that's what the ex-slaves called themselves when they came out of bondage to find homes in the wild land.

ELIAS, the General Store proprietor, enters.

ELIAS

Mornin', Clem!

CLEM

Morning' Elias.

ELIAS

Looks like another sunny day!

ELIAS begins to sweep up in front of his store.

CLEM

PEOPLE COME FROM ALL AROUND

TO THIS FRONTIER TOWN,

LOOKIN' FOR AN OPPORTUNITY.

WHEN YOU COME TO CRAWFORD GULCH

YOU LEAVE YOUR PAST BEHIND.

IT'S THE WEST'S NEXT BESTÉ

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY!

ELIAS AND CLEM

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW,

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

NELLIE, a tomboyish young girl in coveralls, runs in.

NELLIE
Hide me, Clem! Ya gotta hide me!

MRS. GREY, a hard-boned schoolmarm, enters.

GREY
Nellie Jackson, you stop running, you hear?

As MRS. GREY chases NELLIE CANEM FRANK CANEM enters, and catches the fleeing young girl. He is smiling and friendly

CANEM
Whoa there, partner!

CLEM
(to audience)
Sheriff Frank Canem. Everyone knew him as fair man.

CANEM
I'll take care of this Mrs. Grey. (To NELLIE) Nellie, you know what happens to little young'uns who don't go to school?

NELLIE
What, Sheriff?

CANEM
They grow up to be outlaws, and we have to hang them.

NELLIE
(frightened)
Ahhhhh!

NELLIE runs to MRS. GREY.

CLEM
(to audience)
Firm, by fair.

CANEM

I FINALLY FOUND A PLACE WHERE

THE MEASURE OF A MAN IS BY HIS WORK

AND HIS DEEDS,

GREY

I FINALLY FOUND A PLACE WHERE

I CAN USE MY OWN IDEAS TO ATTEND TO

THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS,

CANEM AND GREY

AND IF I EVER NEED A HAND I KNOW

MY NEIGHBORS WILL SEE ME THOUGH.

MY VERY OWN AMERICAN DREAM IS FINALLY

COMING TRUE!

All of the TOWNSFOLK begin to dance.

TOWNSFOLK

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW,

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

PARSON JONES, a timid but kindly man, enters. He cross to CLEM.

PARSON

I don't recollect seein' you in church Sunday, Clem.

CLEM

I don't recollect been there, Parson....

PARSON

Lord's lookin' fer you.

CLEM

Well, he ain't gonna find me in church!

The MAYOR, a well-fed, well-off, cheerful man enters.

MAYOR

Howdy, folks!

TOWNSFOLK

Howdy, Mayor!

CLEM

(indicating MAYOR to audience)

Also President of the Bank.

MAYOR

IT'S A TRIBUTE TO OUR NATION

THAT WITH GRIT AND DETERMINATION

WE CAN CREATE CIVILIZATION

WHERE THERE WAS NOTHING BEFORE!

PARSON

I FEEL A SENSE OF JUBILATION

AS I BUILD THE CRAWFORD CONGREGATION

OUR LORD'S FORGIVING LOVE WILL BE

A REVELATION

AND THERE'LL BE PEACE FOR EVERMORE!

Everyone dances again.

ALL

PEOPLE COME FROM ALL AROUND TO THIS

FRONTIER TOWN LOOKIN' FOR AN OPPORTUNITY.

THE FUTURE LIES in CRAWFORD GULCH

THE WEST'S NEXT BESTÉ

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY.

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW.

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

NELLIE, MRS. GREY, ELIAS exit.

CLEM
(to audience)
Now some say all the problems started 'cause the Sheriff don't wear no guns, some say it was when the Gazette printed all them stories about the Comanche, but I say it all started the day the Stage got attacked...

NELLIE returns, running.

NELLIE
Mr. Mayor! Mr. Mayor!

MAYOR
What is it?

NELLIE
The stage from St. Louis just got bushwhacked!

MAYOR
By who?

NELLIE
Comanche!

All the townsfolk are struck with communal fear.

ALL
Comanche!

NELLIE exits, as MAYOR panickedly turns to CANEM.

MAYOR
Frank, can you..?

CANEM
You want me to go and fi...fiiiiiough.....

Though he started bravely enough, CANEM is unable to finish the word "fight." Apparently when CANEM tries to say a word related to violence he is reduced to a wobbly mess. All but CLEM freeze..

CLEM
(to audience)
Now Sheriff Canem was a great lawman - used to be a buffalo soldier - but nowadays when it came to fightin' Indians he went all jelly-like.

MAYOR, CANEM, and PARSON unfreeze.

MAYOR
(reassuringly)
Forget it, Frank.

CANEM
(straitening back up)

Phew!

MAYOR, CANEM, and PARSON refreeze.

CLEM
(to audience)

He was the hero of the battle of the Gulch, but somethin' in his past kept him from gettin' violent. Luckily, the Comanche on the reservation near Crawford Gulch were right friendly now!

MAYOR, CANEM, and PARSON unfreeze again.

MAYOR

I'm sorry Frank. I forgot.

CANEM

It's just a touch of stomach flu.

PARSON points into the distance.

Parson

Look!

MAYOR

Here comes the stage now!

PARSON

Let's see if the poor souls need our help!

MAYOR, CANEM, and PARSON exit

CLEM
(to audience)

'N just like that the whole thing started.

(sings)

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW,

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

CLEM (CONT'D)

Now, I didn't hear 'bout the attack on the stagecoach, 'cuz I was over at the Bordello. I didn't have no money to go upstairs, but Miss Bitsy let me watch her rehearse the floor show...

SCENE 2

INTERIOR OF THE LA TOI BORDELLO

The Bordello has assembled around CLEM, who sits in a chair as MISS BITSY LA TOI, bordello proprietor, practices a bawdy dance, which ends with her in CLEM's lap.

CLEM
Mighty fine, Miss La Toi, mighty fine!

LA TOI
You do say the nicest things, Clem.

CLEM
I mean it, Bitsy. This has to be the most high class fancy house this side of Chicago.

LA TOI
Who'da thought it. I came to Crawford Gulch with nothin' but an old brass bed, some torn fishnets, and a dream. Now look at me!

CLEM
Bitsy La Toi's Bordello...

LA TOI
And Beauty salon!

CLEM
Beauty Salon?

LA TOI
I'm diversifyin'!

CLEM
Diversiwhatin'?

LA TOI
Pedicure and Prostitute, $3." Whatcha think?

CLEM
Lotta horny cowboys out there with hangnails.

LA TOI
So, Clem you interested in gettin' spiffed up??

CLEM
I'm just little low on cash right now, Bitsy, but (suggestively) I could sure use my corns sanded...

LA TOI
Third time you come in this week!

CLEM

I got big corns!

LA TOI

That's not what I remember...

Victor Toman as CLEM, Lisa Hori Garcia as La Toi Photo by Pax Ahimsa

Suddenly the MAYOR, CLEM, and a disheveled but well dressed woman - CONSTANCE ADAMS - and en extremely well dressed big city dude - CYRUS T. BOGSPAVIN and his manservant JEEVES - enter. JEEVES is wearing a bowler hat.

MAYOR

Get some brandy!

LA TOI

What happened?

BOGSPAVIN

Comanche!

Again, all stop with fear.

ALL

Comanche!

BOGSPAVIN
They attacked the stage!

MAYOR
Fiends! Attacking defenseless women and fancy pants easterners in the middle of the prairie!

LA TOI
You poor thing! Are you alright?

BOGSPAVIN
Just a little shaken -

LA TOI
I was talkin' to her!

CONSTANCE
I'm fine, really.

BOGSPAVIN
Jeeves, take my luggage to the hotel.

JEEVES
(with broad cockney accent)
Yes, Mr. Bogspavin.

JEEVES exits.

BOGSPAVIN
I'm alright, too.

MAYOR
That's great, Mr....

BOGSPAVIN
Bogspavin. Cyrus T. Bogspavin.

MAYOR
Well, Mr. Bogspavin, you both had a pretty lucky escape.

CONSTANCE
I don't know what all the fuss is when -

BOGSPAVIN
- when we only survived a terror you people live everyday!

CONSTANCE
What?

BOGSPAVIN
You people are surrounded by the most bloodthirsty savages that I, Cyrus T. Bogspavin, have ever encountered!

CLEM
We ain't had no trouble before -

BOGSPaVIN
They must have been laying low, bidding their time...

LA TOI
Why?

BOGSPAVIN
To lull you into a false sense of security... They've obviously been planning this attack for years!

MAYOR
Hear that, folks? They been plannin' this fer years!

LA TOI
But the Indians always been so peaceful!

BOGSPAVIN
Aren't you listening?

MAYOR
They've been lulling us into a false sense of senility!

CLEM
Why don't we just go down to their village and talk to...

BOGSPAVIN
Insanity!

MAYOR
Insanity!

BOGSPAVIN AND MAYOR
Insanity!

It is clear that BOGSPAVIN is working at whipping up fear. He is very dramatic.

BOGSPAVIN
(warningly)
You didn't see them...

PARSON enters.

PARSON
I came as soon as I could!

BOGSPAVIN
Screaming devils on their demon ponies!

PARSON
Devils... on demon ponies?

Frightened, the PARSON bumps into MAYOR, and screams. CONSTANCE seems to have a different memory of the events.

CONSTANCE
I only remember one brave -

BOGSPAVIN
That's how it started! Suddenly there were hundreds of them dropping from the trees!

PARSON
Like rotten tomatoes!

CLEM
Tomatoes don't grow on trees.

PARSON
The rotten ones do!

BOGSPAVIN
Surrounded by the savage horde -

CONSTANCE
I don't remember a savage horde.

BOGSPAVIN
A heathen army!

CONSTANCE
No -

BOGSPAVIN
Bloodthirsty bunch?

CONSTANCE
Nope.

BOGSPAVIN
That's because... You'd been knocked out!

CONSTANCE
I don't remember being knocked out.

BOGSPAVIN
Of course you don't! Because you'd knocked out!

MAYOR
Well, at least you both OH MY GOD! Did any of those villains try to take liberties with you?

BOGSPaVIN
Well, one did give me a look -

MAYOR
I was talkin' to her!

CONSTANCE
I don't remember -

BOGSPAVIN
Because... you'd been knocked out!

CONSTANCE
Again?

BOGSPAVIN
You weren't conscious to see those dusky demons staring down at you..

PARSON
Merciful heavens!

BOGSPAVIN
Evil lust smoldering in their eyes...

LA TOI
What happened?

CONSTANCE
(caught up in the moment)
Did I make it?

Pause.

BOGSPAVIN
Yes!

PaRSON
Thank you, Jesus!

BOGSPAVIN
Before they could enact their foul intentions we were rescued!

The sound of heavy boots and spurs on the ground outside freezes all of them. Each step is followed by a gust of wind, and the lonely strum of CLEM's guitar. Suddenly, through the swinging doors of the Bordello, enters THE RIDER, a tall, masked man in a flowing duster coat and two six-shooters. He is extremely heroic. The Townsfolk breathe a sigh of relief.

RIDER
You folks alright?

BOGSPAVIN
Thanks to you!

RIDER
And you, ma'am?

CONSTANCE
I'm fine, Mister... I don't know your name.

RIDER
Ma'am, they call me -

CLEM strums his guitar.

CLEM
(sings)
THE RIDER OF THE SAGE.
(speaks, to audience)
It was five years ago...

The TOWNSFOLK gather around CONSTANCE to tell the tale.

PARSON
A gang of desperadoes rode into town.

MAYOR
Couldn't nobody stop em'!

ClEM
And the Sheriff don't wear no guns!

LA TOI
And just when they was fixin' to tear the town apart - he sprang up out of the sagebrush!

ClEM
And then..!(10 gunshots sound) And ever since then he's been like an avengin' angel lookin' over the town.

CONSTANCE
What's his real name?

LA TOI
I don't know, but I'll trim his cuticles for free anytime!

CoNSTANCE
(to RIDER)
Thank you for savin' us from all those Indians.

RIDER
Indians? I only saw one brave, ma'am.

Michael Gene Sullivan as THE RIDER, and SHERIFF CANEM Photos by Pax Ahimsa

CONSTANCE
But I thought...

BOGSPAVIN
The rest fled for their lives when they saw Mister Sage's approach!

CONSTANCE
I don't remember any of this!

BOGSPAVIN
Because... You'd been knocked out!

CONSTANCE
But I don't even have a headache!

BOGSPAVIN
Listen!

Pause as TOWNSFOLK listen. Sound of wind.

MAYOR
What are we listenin' to? I don't hear any OH MY GOD! Do you think they followed you into town?

RIDER
It's possible!

BOGSPAVIN
We're surrounded!

PARSON
Lord protect us!

MAYOR
Barricade your houses!

TOWNSFOLK run to windows and fearfully peer out.

LA TOI
See anything?

BOGSPAVIN
No, but you know how sneaky those red devils are.

MAYOR
Parson! I need you to get to Elias, see about the general store!

PARSON
(scared)
You... want me to go out there?

MAYOR
Someone has to!

RIDER

I'll go!

RIDER starts to door.

CONSTANCE

Be careful!!

RIDER crosses back to her, looks in her eyes.

RIDER

Thanks, ma'am.

RIDER leaves, and everyone in the room is swept up in the draft of his manly exit.

PARSON

Good thing he went. I didn't want to unleash the wrath of God on them Comanche right now.

CONSTANCE

Listen, I still don't think that-

BOGSPAVIN

This is war, Miss!

MAYOR

That's right! This ain't no time for thinkin'!

CONSTANCE

But -

MAYOR

You just leave everything to the menfolk, Miss...

CONSTANCE

Adams.

The TOWNSFOLK seems taken aback by the name.

LA TOI

Adams? You ain't kin to old Thomas Adams, ran the Gulch Gazette?

CONSTANCE

My father. He was supposed to meet the stage coach. Do any of you know where he might be?

The TOWNSFOLK look evasive. Suddenly the doors pop open, everyone gasps in fear, and SHERIFF CANEM enters.

CANEM

Whatch'all doin' in here?

MAYOR

We're surrounded by injuns!

CANEM
Only injun I see'd out there was Jack Two Trees.

LA TOI
Where was he'?

CANEM
By the church.

PARSON
(alarmed)
What was he doin' to my church?

CANEM
Paintin' it, just like you asked him to.

LA TOI
Well, I guess he musta chased them Comanche away!

CANEM
Who?

CLEM strums his guitar.

ALL EXCEPT CANEM
(sings)

THE RIDER OF THE SAGE.

The CANEM is clearly upset, and crosses to silence CLEM's guitar.

CANEM
(to Clem)
Was *he* here?

CLEM
Just left.

CANEM
Damn!

CANEM crosses to look through door and windows for any sign of RIDER.

CLEM
(to audience)
Didn't everybody like the Rider. Some thought he was just an outlaw usin' Crawford Gulch as a hide out. And Sheriff Canem? He just plain hated him.

CANEM
(to CLEM)
What did he want?

BOGSPAVIN
He fought those savages -

CANEM
Oh, he fougggghouhhh...

At his own attempt to say the word "fight" SHERIFF CANEM again goes all wobbly. As BOGSPAVIN continues to describe the violence SHERIFF CANEM totally jellyfies.

BOGSPAVIN
Guns blazing, fist flying... (noticing the SHERIFF's plight) Good god, young man!

CANEM
Blahuiehsga!

CONSTANCE
Are you alright?

CANEM notice the beautiful CONSTANCE next to him, and suddenly straightens up.

CANEM
Fine... Just a little cramp. I need a banana, some potassium - I been working out alot...

MAYOR
Frank, this here is Miss Adams...

CANEM
Adams? You mean...?

MAYOR
Yep. Could you take her down to the Gazette, and tell her about the...

CANEM
Sure nuff, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR
And take the fancy pants easterner-

BOGSPAVIN
Cyrus T. Bogspavin!

MAYOR
To the hotel.

CANEM
Right this way, folks.

CANEM, CONSTANCE, and BOGSPAVIN exit.

MAYOR
Parson, go to the store and warn Elias!

PARSON dashes out.

MAYOR
Clem, get to the telegraph office. Tell the capital Crawford Gulch is under siege!

CLEM rushes out.

MAYOR
And Bitsy -

LA TOI
Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR
Is Lulu free?

LA TOI
Why, of course.

MAYOR
Good. I think I need a quick facial to calm my nerves.

LA TOI
Go right on up, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR and LA TOI exit, Clem re-enters.

CLEM
(to audience)
Ten years after the Battle of The Gulch, and we was at war with the Comanche again. Didn't nobody know which Comanche bushwhacked the stage, so the Army came in, attacked every Indian village in a hundred miles. Used some kinda special attack, called pre-emptive. Don't know what it means, but it sure took the Comanche by surprise!

MAYOR
(re-enters, with cold cream on his face)
Clem! Send that telegram!

CLEM
I better git!

CLEM exits.

SCENE 3

OFFICE OF THE CRAWFORD GULCH GAZETTE

Inside of a small town newspaper. CANEM, carrying suitcase, and CONSTANCE enter the office..

CANEM

Welp, here ya are, ma'am. Crawford Gulch Gazette, just the way yer Pa left it.

CoNSTANCE

Thank you Sheriff.

CANEM

You can call me Frank, Ma'am.

CONSTANCE

This is Daddy's dream. His own newspaper. The New York Times of the West!

CANEM

That's what he called it.

CONSTANCE

What do you mean "called" it? And why did you say "how he left it?"

CANEM

Ma'am...

CONSTANCE

Sheriff...

CANEM

Yer Pa... He's...

CONSTANCE

What?

CANEM

He's Dead!

CONSTANCE collapses, as CANEM catches her.

CONSTANCE

What?

CANEM

I'm sorry to have to break it to you like this, ma'am.

CONSTANCE

But... He just sent me a telegram...last week...he asked me to come out to Crawford...

CANEM

Just happened two days ago.

CONSTANCE
What... what happened?

CANEM
Don't rightly know. Early one morning Gazette office didn't open and we found him right there!

CANEM point at empty desk.

CONSTANCE
Behind his typewriter.

CANEM
Looked like he worked himself to death. Folks around here had alot of respect fer yer Pa. Gazette was exposin' a lot of double dealin'... that gang of natural gas swindlers down in Houston... that Stewart woman, ran that crooked bake shop -

CONSTANCE
Daddy always wanted a newspaper that told the truth.

CANEM
That's why we all liked him!

CONSTANCE
Printing lies is easy, printing the truth takes courage, that's what he always says, I mean said...

CONSTANCE breaks down again.

CANEM
I'm sorry, ma'am. Yer pa, he was a nice feller.

CONSTANCE pulls herself together, picks up her luggage.

CONSTANCE
Sheriff, could you tell me where I can by a ticket back to Baltimore?

CANEM
(disappointed)
Yer... leavin'?

CONSTANCE
With Daddy gone... Ain't nothing holding me here.

CANEM
But... Oh, well, I'll take yer luggage to the hotel, and pick you up a ticket on the way back.

CANEM takes luggage from CONSTANCE, starts to leave office.

CONSTANCE
Thank you.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as NELLY Photo by Pax Ahimsa

CANEM stops, gives CONSTANCE longing look.

CANEM
(heartbroken)
My pleasure.

CANEM exits. CONSTANCE cross to her Father's desk. On it is a framed picture. She picks it up, and by the way she looks at it it is clear it is a picture of her father. As she hold the picture to her breast NELLIE enters, at a run.

NELLIE
Excuse me, Miss Adams!

CONSTANCE
Who are you?

NELLIE
I'm Nellie! Star reporter of the Crawford Gulch Gazette!

CONSTANCE
Why aren't you in school?

NELLIE
I got me a special assignment: write about the new lady editor!

CONSTANCE
What are you talkin' about?

NELLIE
Yer Pa always said when his daughter got here, ya'll were gonna print the best paper west of the Mississippi!

CONSTANCE
You knew Pa?

NELLIE
Best reporter he had!

CONSTANCE
Then he must have told you I've never worked at a paper - I'm just a bank clerk, countin' numbers - I don't know about the news. I can't take my Pa's place.

NELLIE
He thought you could.

Song: " WHEN THE WORLD TURNS UPSIDE DOWN"

NELLIE

YOU'RE DADDY SPOKE OFTEN ABOUT YOU,

HE WAS COUNTING THE DAYS 'TILL YOU CAME

HE SAID THAT YOU'D BE HIS PARTNER,

AND THAT PRINTERS INK RUNS IN YOUR VEINS.
HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT YOUR WE'RE DESTINED
TO LEAD A LIFE THAT WOULD MARK YOU AS GREAT!
YOU COULD START BY RUNNING
THE NEWSPAPER HERE,
YOU'D BE THE FIRST BLACK LADY EDITOR
IN THE STATE.

CONSTANCE

JUST KEEPING HIS BOOKS WAS THE JOB I EXPECTED,
I NEVER KNEW HE THOUGHT I'D FILL HIS SHOES.
I DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE THE WILL TO CARRY ON HERE -
DO I REALLY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES ?
DO I REALLY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES
TO PRINT THE NEWS?

IT'S HARD TO KEEP YOUR FOOTING
WHEN THE WORLD TURNS UPSIDE DOWN.
IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO
WHEN YOU'RE SPINNING,
WHEN YOU'RE SPINNING ROUND AND ROUND

NOW I'M ALONE,
WITHOUT MY FATHER HERE TO GUIDE ME.
BUT THIS PAPER IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HIM -
HOW CAN I LEAVE PART OF HIM BEHIND ME?

IT'S HARD TO KEEP YOUR FOOTING

WHEN THE WORLD TURNS UPSIDE DOWN.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO

WHEN YOU'RE SPINNING,

WHEN YOU'RE SPINNING,

WHEN YOU'RE SPINNING ROUND AND ROUND.

Velina Brown as CONSTANCE Photo by Pax Ahimsa

Just then a window in the room opens and an "Indian" leaps onto the room. (It should be clear that this is not an actual Native American, but someone in a red Union suit. The "Indian" is also wearing a bowler hat.) The "Indian" chases NELLIE and CONSTANCE around the office, waving a tomahawk and screaming. Just as he corners them behind the desk the door to the office opens and the RIDER enters. The RIDER draws his pistol and shoots the tomahawk out of the "Indian's" hand. The "Indian" then balls up both fists. The RIDER re-holsters his pistol.

RIDER

Alright, a fair fight.

Seeing his chance, the "Indian" draws a knife and attacks the RIDER, who wrestles the knife away, and delivers a punch to the "Indian's" chin, which knocks the "Indian" sprawling over the desk and unconscious. CONSTANCE and NELLIE run to the RIDER's side.

CONSTANCE

Thank goodness!

NELLIE

(to the RIDER)

How'd ya know?

RIDER

I knew there was going to be trouble the minute I saw the Sheriff leave. Seen it a hundred times - the old "wait until the Sheriff leaves with the luggage, then attack the lady in the newspaper office" trick.

CONSTANCE

Who are you really?

RIDER

Ma'am, I told you, I'm the...

Suddenly CLEM enters, strums guitar.

CLEM

(sings)

RIDER OF THE SAGE.

(speaks, to audience)

Everyone always asked him who he was - but he never said. It was a mystery!

CONSTANCE

Alright. Then why are you protecting Crawford Gulch?

RIDER

Just like yer Pa.

CONSTANCE is struck with the memory of her father. She breaks down.

CONSTANCE

Pa!

RIDER

Always askin' questions! Well, ma'am all I can tell you is when ever this town's in danger, danger like a ragin' fire, there's a rain that's gonna fall, and put out that fire! And that rains a'called -

CLEM strums his guitar.

CLEM

(sings)

THE RIDER OF THE SAGE!

RIDER exits and again the others are swept up in the wind of his wake. CLEM exits after him..

NELLIE

Wait!

NELLIE points at the unconscious Indian.

NELLIE

What do we do with him?

CONSTANCE

Turn him over to the Army.

NELLIE

Maybe we should question him ourselves! I just read an article about how they interrogate prisoners!

CONSTANCE

Really?

NELLIE

So we're gonna need some high heeled shoes and a dog collar...

The "Indian" wakes up. In his confusion he accidentally reveals himself to actually be BOGSPAVIN's manservant, JEEVES disguised as an Indian.

JEEVES

(with broad cockney)

What the hell... I mean... ugh!

SHERIFF CANEM enters.

CANEM

Well, ma'am, I took off yer luggage to the hotel, and -

JEEVES runs to door, ready to battle his way past the CANEM, but SHERIFF CANEM has jellyfied at the thought of fighting,

CANEM

Aaaaoooghhhuuh!

CANEM offers no resistance, and JEEVES escapes.

CONSTANCE

Sheriff! Are you alright?

CANEM, seeing CONSTANCE, quickly regains his composure.

CANEM

I'm... Fine ma'am, fine! Just a little low blood sugar. Need a cookie or somethin'...

NELLIE

Frank! You just missed the Rider!

CANEM

What?

NELLIE begins writing in her notebook.

NELLIE

"The brave and fearless Rider fought the Indian with fearless braveness."

CANEM

Nellie, don't go makin' that outlaw into a hero! The man's wearin' a mask! Probably has a skin disease or somethin'.

NELLIE

I'm just writin' the truth! That's what a reporter does!

CANEM

Miss Adams, I got yer ticket back to Baltimore.

CONSTANCE

Never mind about the ticket, Sheriff... I'm staying!

CANEM

(thrilled)

Ya'r?

CONSTANCE

My Daddy wouldn't want the Gazette to run away from a fight!

CANEM

Folks'll be glad to hear it, ma'am. (lovingly) I sure am.

CONSTANCE

Sheriff Canem...

CANEM crosses to CONSTANCE.

CANEM
I told ya, ma'am, you can call me Frank.

Pause.

CONSTANCE
(politely)
Sheriff.

Velina Brown as CONSTANCE, Michael Gene Sullivan as CANEM
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

CANEM wilts with the rejection, and leaves.

NELLIE
So, what's my first assignment, lady editor?

CONSTANCE
I don't know...

NELLIE
What would yer pa say?

CONSTANCE AND NELLIE
Tell the truth!

CONSTANCE
Come on Nellie! The Gulch Gazette is going to tell the truth about this war! We have to interview the Mayor, the farmers, the soldiers...

NELLIE
Yes, Ma'am! (NELLIE begins to write) "The brave Miss Adams, overcomed her frightened fears and sent her star reporter out to report her first story." Old Man Adams sure would be proud ma'am!

NELLIE exits.

CONSTANCE
Daddy...

DO I REALLY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

I HOPE I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO PRINT THE NEWS.

CONSTANCE exits. CLEM enters, with newspaper.

CLEM
(to audience)
After that seemed like Miss Adams didn't have no shortage of reports 'bout the Comanche. The Army, the Government, even Mr. Bogspavin always seemed to know what they was up to. Apparently they was cookin' up another plot to kill us every day! Meanwhile...

The office has changed around CLEM to the interior of the town chapel. There are a few pews, the PARSON is arranging his pulpit, as CLEM guards the door.

SCENE 4

THE PARSON'S CHAPEL.

There is a knock at the door. CLEM and PARSON tense up, until the second part of a secret knock is finished. CLEM opens the door, and the MAYOR enters.

CLEM
(to audience)
The Mayor... called a meetin' so the town folk could figure how to deal with the Indian terror.

PARSON
Mr. Mayor I don't think all this is necessary -

MAYOR
You stick to savin' their souls, Parson. You let me take care of the rest.

PARSON
But arresting all the Indians in town is pointless! They haven't done anything wrong!

MAYOR
The only way to get these savages to respect our laws is to arrest them before they have the chance to break any.

PARSON
But the Comanche have been living with us for years! Jack Two Trees helped me build the chapel and has been workin' here ever since.

MAYOR
Maybe he's been layin' low - biding his time, lulling you -

PARSON
(ominously)
Into a false sense of senility... but he's always seemed so friendly...

Knock at door. MAYOR, PARSON, and CLEM freeze in terror, until the second half of the secret knock is heard. CLEM opens the door, and SHERIFF CANEM enters.

SHERIFF
Howdy Mayor, Parson.

MAYOR
Sheriff. I hear you had a little trouble at the Gazette office.

SHERIFF
Trouble?

MAYOR
You let that Indian get away!

SHERIFF
Well, I had a touch of food poisonin'...

MAYOR
Kornsarnit, Canem! How can you protect this town if you can't fight the Comanche!

SHERIFF
Army fights the wars, my job is to stop crime.

MAYOR
Ain't murderin' women and children a crime?

SHERIFF
I been Sheriff fer 8 years, ain't nobody complained.

MAYOR
Maybe we ought to have a new sheriff.

SHERIFF
(shocked)
A new sheriff?

MAYOR
Perhaps someone like... The Rider!

CANEM is outraged at being compared to the RIDER again.

SHERIFF
The man wears a mask! I'm tellin' you - he's got eczema or something - he's probably contagious...

MAYOR
Well, what ever he's got, it ain't food poisoning!

Knock at door. All freeze, except CANEM, who jellifies. After second knock CLEM opens door, and MRS. GREY and NELLIE enter.

GREY
Howdy, Clem, Sheriff.

CANEM
Mrs. Grey, Nellie... Now look here Mayor -

MAYOR
Why don't you just go make sure everyone in town gets to the meeting, Sheriff.

CANEM
Fine!

CANEM angrily exits, as NELLIE and MRS. GREY talk.

GREY
Nellie, I don't want you botherin' those children anymore!

Nellie
I weren't -

GREY
Wasn't!

NELLIE
Wasn't botherin' them! They're the only Comanche kids I know - and I'm workin' on this article -

GREY
I don't want you annoying your classmates with a bunch of questions! Those Indian children are just like the other students. You let them do their work!

MAYOR
Alright now, settle down! My fellow Gulchonions! We got a lot to talk about! Comanche terrorizin' us, renegades slittin' our throats in our sleep, and of course the upcoming Founders Day picnic. But first I think we should ask Parson Jones here to bless this meetin' with a little prayer.

PARSON
Dear Lord, please look down on us in our time of struggle, and help us see the way to your truth. Help us see all our red brothers not as the enemy, but as simple heathen children who need our help to find the love and understanding we find in your son -

There is a loud knock at door.

PARSON (cont'd)
Jesus Christ!

Everyone runs to the other side of the room in fear. As they cower, there is another knock at door.

MAYOR
Oh, it must be Elias coming late.

All relax, and PARSON crosses and opens the door. The outside of the door is riddled with arrows. PARSON quickly slams the door.

PARSON
We're under attack!

TOWNSFOLK runs to the other side of the room again. A muffled drumming is heard.

MAYOR
Where the hell is that sound coming from?

NELLIE
(pointing at floor beneath them)
Down there!

TOWNSFOLK all leap off THAT area of floor. PARSON points at a trap door in the floor.

PARSON
Who put that trap door down there?

CLEM
That's yer storm cellar! You asked Jack Two Trees and his brothers to build it.

PARSON
I didn't ask him to fill it with murderin' redskins!

NELLIE
Murderers? But...

MAYOR
Parson ain't there a back door outta here?

PARSON
Over there!

TOWNSFOLK all race to back door.

GREY
I can't believe I left my students alone with those murdering Comanche children! Come on, Nellie! I'll never forgive myself if they scalped any of my babies!

NELLIE
But you just said -

MAYOR, NELLIE and MRS. GREY exit. PARSON is alone, and decides to not give up his chapel without a spiritual fight. The drumming continues.

PARSON
That's God's basement your hiding in... He knows your down there! I got the Lord right here with me, and he's lookin' pretty mad...

Trap door springs opens.

PARSON
Ahhhh! Mr. Mayor!

PARSON runs out. After a moment of drumming a head in a top hat peers out of the trap door - it is MR. BOGSPAVIN, beating on a small Indian drum. After a moment he stops, and looks around the abandoned room. He smiles.

BOGSPAVIN
Excellent!

BOGSPAVIN exits through trap door. Suddenly the front door opens, and the RIDER enters. He examines the room, the floor, then the trap. Drawing his gun, he leaps through the trap door, slamming it closed. The set transform back into the Bordello.

Photos by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 5

MISS BITSY LA TOI'S BORDELLO.

CLEM is gently strumming his guitar when LA TOI enters with a newspaper.

LA TOI
Howdy Clem. Seen the Gazette today?

LA TOI shows newspaper to CLEM.

CLEM
(reading)
"Increase in Comanche attacks pre-dicted by new 'Office of Home Range Security.' Hoe-downs and cattle shows likely targets."

LA TOI
(reading)
"Mayor says don't let bloodthirsty terror interfere with summer shopping fun." Well, ain't nobody shopping here.

CLEM
War time, Bitsy. Folks don't have money for luxuries.

LA TOI
Since when is "Bitsy La Toi's Bordello and Barbershop" a luxury?

CLEM
Barbershop?

LA TOI
Hooker and a haircut, $2.

CLEM
What happened to the Beauty salon?

LA TOI
Men feel more comfortable in a barbershop.

CLEM
And you know, I could use a shave...

LA TOI
You still ain't paid me fer havin' yer bunions carved!

MAYOR enters.

MAYOR
Howdy, Bitsy. I'm feelin' kinda tense. I could use a haircut.

LA TOI
I could take a little off the top to start-

MAYOR
And perhaps Lulu could give me a little on the bottom to finish.

LA TOI
Two bucks!

MAYOR pulls a slip of paper out of his pocket.

MAYOR
I have a coupon!

CLEM
Bitsy...

LA TOI
I cain't run this place on friendship, Clem! If'n you don't have cash, yer gonna have to git out! Wait right here Mr. Mayor, I'll go make sure Lulu's ready.

LA TOI exits.

CLEM
(to audience)
Now there was a time when Bitsy would like me get my bangs evened for free. But once the War started seemed like there weren't as much kindness left in the Gulch.

BOGSPAVIN enters with newspaper. He seems to be in a very good mood.

BOGSPAVIN
(to CLEM)
Hello my boy - did you see the latest Gazette? (reads)"Secretary of State says Comanche have developed Arrows of Mass Destruction..."!

CLEM
I have to go...

BOGSPAVIN
Don't you want to hear -

CLEM exits, despondent. BOGSPAVIN nods at the MAYOR, who politely nods back. After a moment, and sure that they are alone, the MAYOR sidles up to BOGSPAVIN.

MAYOR
(knowingly)
How are things back in Hartford?

BOGSPAVIN
(at a loss)
Hartford?

MAYOR
(meaningfully)
How's the old Gang?

BOGSPAVIN
Old Gang?

Suddenly LA TOI enters, and the MAYOR quickly moves away from BOGSPAVIN.

MAYOR
Shhhh!

LA TOI
Well, if'n it ain't my best two customers. Here for a haircut?

BOGSPAVIN
Is Lulu available?

MAYOR
(upset)
Lulu?

BOGSPAVIN
She gives the best trims.

LA TOI
Oh, that's right! I'm sorry, Mr. Mayor. I plumb forgot - Mr. Bogspavin here reserved Lulu for as long as he's in town.

MAYOR
What?

LA TOI
Paid in advance.

MAYOR
But she's the only one kin git my hair just so!

LA TOI
Well, you'll have to git yerself just so for a while. Just a minute, Mr. Bogspavin - Lulu was gittin' ready for the Mayor, so I'll help her unbuckle, dry off, then she'll be all ready.

LA TOI exits. The MAYOR makes sure they are alone before approaching BOGSPAVIN.

MAYOR
Cyrus! It's great to see you again!

BOGSPAVIN
(confused)
Well, I've been cooped up in the Hotel...

MAYOR
Don't you remember me?

BOGSPAVIN
From...

Suddenly the MAYOR's accent changes from country to refined, and eastern. And with his accent his whole demeanor changes.

MAYOR
It's me! Randolph! Remember..?

Song: "WE ARE THE BOYS"

WE ARE THE BOYS OF SIGMA DELTA BETA

ISN'T A FRATERNITY BETTER OF GREAT - AA,

BOGSPAVIN

FROM WALL STREET TO THE WHITE HOUSE THAT'S

WHERE OUR BROTHERS SIT,

MAYOR

AND IF THE PEONS DON'T LIKE IT

BOTH

THEY CAN EAT OUR -

BOGSPAVIN
Randolph! It is you!

BOGSPAVIN and MAYOR do an elaborate secret handshake.

BOGSPAVIN
What in God's name are you doing here? I thought your father had a bank all picked out for you in New York.

MAYOR
After my college career the family didn't think I was ready.

BOGSPAVIN
And what about that political Job in Florida?

MAYOR
My brother got it! Daddy said maybe I should start out in a place where people don't put a lot of stock in brains.

BOTH
Texas!

MAYOR
So now I'm president of the Crawford Gulch branch of the family bank, and I'm the Mayor -

BOGSPAVIN
And chairman of the country bumpkin society from the looks of it! What would our fraternity brothers say if they saw you so... westernized?

MAYOR
(resuming western accent)
These folks ain't gonna elect no mayor from Connecticut!

BOGSPAVIN
Oh, "ain't" they?

MAYOR
So I got me a Texas twang and a boyish grin. Sorry I didn't say howdy before, but I don't want folks to know I ain't one of them.

BOGSPAVIN
But you're still one of the Gang, aren't you?

MAYOR
(with eastern accent)
Of course!

They do elaborate handshake again.

BOGSPAVIN
As a fellow sigma delta beta perhaps I can help you convince your family you do have what it takes to succeed.

MAYOR
How?

BOGSPAVIN
I'm going to let you in on a scheme I'm working -

LA TOI enters with a damp towel.

LA TOI
Almost ready! Just have to get the Mayor's deer butter off the bedposts and she'll be all set!

LA TOI exits.

BOGSPAVIN
Deer butter? My God, you have gone country!

MAYOR
(upset, with western accent)
Kornsarnit!

BOGSPAVIN
(taken aback)
Did you just say... Kornsarnit?

MAYOR
(with eastern accent)
It's... latin! Cyrus, what's this scheme you said you were working on?

BOGSPAVIN
I don't know if I can trust you - you're so local.

MAYOR
(western)
No I ain't! (eastern) I mean, I'm not!

BOGSPAVIN
Can you keep a secret?

MAYOR
Well, my wife hasn't found out about Lulu yet.

BOGSPAVIN
Water.

MAYOR
Water? What water?

BOGSPAVIN
Right out there, under that Comanche land. Millions of gallons of water. And in the hills to the west - Coal! Tons of coal!

MAYOR
So yer in the business of water and coal?

BOGSPAVIN
You fool! Water and coal equal Steam!

MAYOR
Yer in the business of water and steam?

BOGSPAVIN
You weren't top of our class, were you?

MAYOR
About a C average.

BOGSPAVIN
Listen closely, I'm in the business of American progress!

MAYOR
You work for the schools?

BOGSPAVIN
No!

Song: "THE STEEL WHEELS OF PROGRESS"

I AM CYRUS T. BOGSPAVIN

AND I REPRESENT THE RAILROAD -

SYMBOL OF OUR NATION'S DESTINY

ALLOTTED BY PROVIDENCE TO OVERSPREAD

THE CONTInenTS

WITH THE TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL

OF THE 19TH CENTURY!

MAYOR
Ain't no railroad in or near Crawford Gulch.

BOGSPAVIN
Not yet.

BUT RAILROADS RUN ON STEAM, AND ONCE THAT

INDIAN LAND IS MINE,

I'LL LAY TRACKS ACROSS THIS WORTHLESS LAND

THAT WILL MAKE THE PRAIRIE SHINE!

MAYOR

MOST PEOPLE SEE THIS WILD LAND AND

SIMPLY SEE A DESERT

WHERE ONLY SNAKES AND INDIANS SURVIVE.

BOGSPAVIN

BUT I AM IN THE BUSINESS OF

TRANSFORMING USELESS DIRT

INTO COUNTRY WHERE THE CIVILIZED CAN LEAD

DECENT MODERN LIVES!

MAYOR

When is this all going to happen?

BOGSPAVIN

As soon as this little war is over.

MAYOR

Mighty lucky for us those Comanche attacked that stage.

BOGSPAVIN

Yes. I'm just a lucky man...

AMERICAN INGENUITY AND STEAM -

A PERFECT MARRIAGE!

THE STEAM TRAIN! THE STEAM BOAT!

THE STEAM HORSELESS CARRIAGE!

MAYOR

STEAM WILL DRIVE THIS WORLD INTO

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!

BOGSPAVIN

AND CORPORATE DOMINATION IS

OUR MANIFEST DESTINY!

MAYOR

THESE INDIANS ARE AN OBSTACLE,

TO THAT YOU MUST CONFESS.

BOGSPAVIN

BUT SOON THEY WILL BE GROUND BENEATH

THE STEAL WHEELS OF PROGRESS!

BOTH

THE STEAL WHEELS OF PROGRESS!

MAYOR

IF I UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCE OF

WHAT I'M BEING TOLD

WHEN THE RAILROAD COMES, CRAWFORD'S DIRT

WILL BE WORTH IT'S WEIGHT IN GOLD!

(speaking)

So the two of us Sigma Delta Beta are going to control Crawford Cutch?

BOGSPAVIN

Aren't you listening? My interest is in water!

BOGSPAVIN

YOU CAN KEEP THIS PUNY TOWN AND

IT'S FUTURE RAILROAD STATION

I'M MORE CONCERNED WITH THE ENERGY SOURCE

THAT WILL EXPAND THE NATION!

MAYOR

Say, what if somethin' replaces steam?

BOGSPAVIN

Replaces steam? Impossible! What could ever be as important to transportation as steam?

MAYOR

I guess yer right.

BOGSPAVIN

Of course I am! That, my old frat brother is why you're just a Mayor, while I am...

BOTH

CYRUS T. BOGSPAVIN AND I

(YOU) REPRESENT THE RAILROAD

SYMBOL OF OUR NATION'S DESTINY,

BOGSPAVIN

AND WHAT'S GOOD FOR COUNTRY IS

ALSO GOOD FOR ME!

MAYOR

WHAT'S GOOD FOR CYRUS BOGSPAVIN IS ALSO

GOOD FOR ME!

BOTH

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA IS

ALSO GOOD FOR ME!

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA IS

ALSO GOOD FOR ME!

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA -

MAYOR

So let me git this straight: If Crawford Gulch is gonna to be right next to a railroad, whoever control it...

BOGSPAVIN

Will have it made!

MAYOR

And once yer gone Lulu can start waxin' my back agin?

BOGSPAVIN

Yes.

MAYOR

Just checkin'.

BOTH

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA IS

aLSO GOOD FOR ME!

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA IS

ALSO GOOD FOR ME!

WHAT'S GOOD FOR AMERICA IS

ALSO GOOD FOR ME!

They exit, dancing. The Bordello is transformed into the Office of the Crawford Gulch Gazette.

Amos Glick as BOGSPAVIN, Ed Holmes as MAYOR
Photos by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 6

OFFICE OF THE CRAWFORD GULCH GAZETTE.

CONSTANCE enters the Gazette office, trailed by the PARSON, who is panickedly dogging her.

CONSTANCE
I don't have time right now, Parson Jones -

PARSON
You got to warn folks! I seed a whole tribe of them devils! Sneakin' into town in the middle of the night -

NELLIE enters, on the run.

NELLIE
Ms. Adams! I got a story!

PARSON
- Half nekkid they was, faces all painted -

CONSTANCE
Nellie, what do you have?

PARSON
- Had them big 'ole head dresses on their heads!

CONSTANCE
(to the PARSON)
Those were new girls for the Bordello!

PARSON
Ahhhh! That's what they <u>want</u> us to think!

NELLIE
Army says they caught a Comanche tryin' to blow up a wagon train full of ammunition!

CONSTANCE
How?

NELLIE
Tried to light his moccasin on fire!

PARSON
Maybe... they want us to think they're in the Bordello, so's the men won't go there no more-

CONSTANCE
I'm workin' on an article about an American renegade who was caught fightin' fer the Indians. I'm callin' it "Little Johnny Blackfoot".

PARSON

- But the minute we let these terrorizin' redskins come between us and payin' fer sex the terrorizers have won!

CONSTANCE

Parson Jones!

PARSON

I'm tellin' you there's injun sneakiness all around us! What kind of American doesn't want to print the truth about the enemy?

BOGSPAVIN enters, gasping.

BOGSPaVIN

Ms. Adams! There's been a tragedy!

NELLIE

What?

BOGSPAVIN

Comanche!

NELLIE/CONSTANCE/PARSON

Comanche!

BOGSPAVIN

They left some blankets in an abandoned village and the soldiers who touched them came down with smallpox!

CONSTANCE

No!

PARSON

See? I told ya! Some kinda sneaky injun homeopathological warfare!

NELLIE

What did the blankets look like?

BOGSPAVIN

I believe they were Blue, with two yellow stripes.

NELLIE

(writes)

Just like the blankets the missionaries gived the Comanche last month!"

BOGSPAVIN

The villains! Using our own Christian generosity against us!

The PARSON is almost beside himself with panic.

PARSON

Oh Lord! I traded for a Comanche rug last year! It's in my house right now!

PARSON goes to door.

NELLIE

Where ya goin?

PARSON

I gotta burn that rug... before we all catch Comanche-pox!

PARSON runs out.

CONSTANCE

I already have so many stories - "Comanche burn farm," "Indians kidnap family-" I don't have time to verify every one...

BOGSPAVIN

Print them all!

CONSTANCE

But that wouldn't be good journalism!

NELLIE

Your Pa always said...

CONSTANCE AND NELLIE

"Check your sources!"

BOGSPAVIN

But waiting gives the enemy time to commit more outrages!

CONSTANCE

My Pa said even if the President says something a real reporter confirms it!

BOGSPAVIN

American lives are in danger! People need to see our red enemy face to face, before some peace-minded simpleton starts negotiations!

CONSTANCE

Negotiations? What negotiations?

BOGSPAVIN

Listen!

All pause in tense anticipation. Silence..

CONSTANCE

What are we listening -

BOGSPAVIN crosses to window.

BOGSPAVIN

Listen!

Pause. Silence.

CONSTANCE

I don't hear-

BOGSPAVIN, frustrated, more clearly gives the spoken signal.

BOGSPAVIN
(shouting at window)

Listen!

Pause.

CONSTANCE

About those negotiations...

Suddenly JEEVES, dressed again as an "Indian," pops in through the window and attacks! But suddenly the RIDER appears.

Michael Carreiro as JEEVES, Velina Brown as CONSTANCE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as NELLY
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

RIDER
Hold it right there!

RIDER and JEEVES fight. During fight RIDER is almost overcome, but CONSTANCE hits "Indian" over the head with the typewriter. But in the struggle CONSTANCE has injured her arm.

BOGSPAVIN
Well done, Miss Adams!

NELLIE
(writing)
"The brave Miss Adams used amazin' braveness to overcome the dangerous Indian."

BOGSPAVIN
(to NELLIE)
Don't you think "godless savage" sounds better?

RIDER
Miss Adams - Your arm! Are you alright?

CONSTANCE
I'm... I'm alright... now.

BOGSPAVIN
You see, Miss Adams - how could anyone talk to them?

CONSTANCE
Your right. They are savage! I've tried to understand them but I see...(To RIDER) your hand, it's bleeding!

RIDER
I guess that Indian had some metal teeth.

CONSTANCE
I'll get some bandages.

CONSTANCE exits.

NELLIE
(writing)
"Bloody with blood, the brave Rider was unscared still."

JEEVES comes to, sees his boos, BOGSPAVIN.

JEEVES
(still Cockney)
Mr. Bogspavin?

BOGSPAVIN
(quickly)
Shhh! (to RIDER) And while you are being tended I will escort this ruffian to the stockade.

RIDER

Wait a minute -

BOGSPAVIN

Tish-tosh! I insist!

NELLIE

They got some new questioning rules, so you have to pick up a whip and some gelatin at the store!

BOGSPAVIN

Don't worry about me! This savage is no match for-

NELLIE AND BOGSPAVIN

Cyrus T. Bogspavin!

BOGSPAVIN exits with "Indian". CONSTANCE enters. She looks admiringly at the RIDER, then frustratedly at NELLIE.

CONSTANCE

Nellie -

NELLIE

Miss Adams...

CONSTANCE

Isn't your mother expecting you home?

NELLIE

Naw. Her and Pa told me if I stayed out 'till dark they'd give me a little brother next year.

CONSTANCE

Well, why don't you go set the type for tomorrow's front page.

NELLIE

Which story are we gonna print?

CONSTANCE

All of them.

NELLIE

But we ain't confirmed -

CONSTANCE

I don't want anyone killed 'cause I was waitin' for confirmation!

NELLIE

But yer Pa always said -

CONSTANCE

Daddy ain't here! I have to do what I think is best. Now run along.

NELLIE
Okay, Miss Adams.

NELLIE exits. CONSTANCE applies bandage to RIDER's hand.

RIDER
Thanks, ma'am... Looks like yer paper's gettin' pretty popular.

CONSTANCE
Well, I can't fight those devils the way you can, but at least I can tell the truth about what they do.

RIDER
I never knowed a woman could tie a good bandage before.

CONSTANCE
(flirting)
And have you "known" many women?

RIDER
(not understanding the flirting)
Heck, thousands! They're all over the place! I had seven sisters, there was my ma -

CONSTANCE
I didn't mean like that! I meant, you know, (suggestively) "known"...

RIDER
(finally getting it)
Oh! No, ain't many women want to hitch up with a broke down gunslinger.

CONSTANCE
You don't look broke down from here...

RIDER
The West takes its toll, Miss, and I've 'bout run dry. But I'm thinkin' it might be time to hang up my mask, settle down on a little place of my own, raise a bunch of little riders...

CONSTANCE
Sounds nice. Once this war is over, I wouldn't mind having a flowerpatch outside my window, kids running around...

CONSTANCE and the RIDER are finally on the same page, romantically. They draw together.

RIDER
This would be the town to sink down roots...

CONSTANCE
With the right man...

RIDER
Constance...

CONSTANCE
I don't know your name...

RIDER
I want to tell you...Wait a minute!

Suddenly the RIDER leaps to his feet.

RIDER
What kind of Indian has metal teeth?

CONSTANCE
One with a dental plan?

RIDER
I gotta go!

The RIDER runs to the door.

CONSTANCE
I'll see you soon?

The RIDER pauses, looks at CONSTANCE.

RIDER
You can count on it.

Another dramatic RIDER exit. CONSTANCE swoons around the office. Unseen by CONSTANCE the MAYOR enters.

MAYOR
Miss Adams?

CONSTANCE
(startled)
Mr. Mayor! You scared me!

MAYOR
I thought I saw a shadow leave the Gazette.

CONSTANCE
You did! The Rider saved Nellie, Mr. Bogspavin and me from another Indian attack!

MAYOR
Mr. Bogspavin was here?

CONSTANCE
He just left.

MAYOR
The reason I came by is I wanted to talk to you about your father's debt.

CONSTANCE
What debt?

MAYOR
For the printing press. I'm sorry to say this, but when he died your father's loan defaulted.

CONSTANCE
But I didn't know about the debt!

MAYOR
It's not your fault, but the bank does have rules...

CONSTANCE
What was the collateral?

MAYOR
Well...

CANEM enters.

CANEM
I heard there was trouble!

MAYOR
Ten minutes ago! Right now Miss Adams and I are talking.

CANEM
Are you okay, Miss Adams?

CONSTANCE
I'm fine, Sheriff.

CANEM
(hopefully)
I told you - call me Frank, Ma'am.

MAYOR
Too late to be the hero here, Frank. The Rider already did your job.

CANEM
The Rider?!

CONSTANCE
I'm feeling pretty tired. I think I'll go back to the hotel.

CANEM
Want me to walk with you, ma'am.

CONSTANCE
That's alright, Sheriff.

CONSTANCE Exits.

MAYOR

Yes, I guess she'd prefer to walk with someone who can protect her. Miss Adams!

MAYOR exits after CONSTANCE..

Song: "SHE WON'T EVEN CALL ME FRANK"

CANEM

I THOUGHT I FOUND A TOWN

WHERE I COULD FINALLY LIVE IN PEACE

WHERE I COULD LEAVE MY VIOLENT PAST BEHIND.

NOW MY TOWN IS UNDER SIEGE,

AND I'M PARaLyZED WITH FRIGHT -

WHAT USE IS A MAN IN TIMES OF WAR

IF HE CAN'T EVEN F....!

CANEM still can't say the word "fight."

SHE WON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME,

SHE'S FOUND HERSELF A HERO!

WHEN THE RIDER CAME ON THE SCENE

MY CHANCES SANK...

HE'S EVERYTHING A MAN SHOULD BE:

BRAVE, TALL, AND VIRILE,

AND CONSTANCE WON'T EVEN CALL ME FRANK!

WHEN DANGER COMES A CALLIN' I

TRY WITH ALL MY MIGHT,

BUT I GUESS SHE NEEDS A MAN

WHO CAN DRAW HIS GUN AND F! F! F...!

MAYBE I SHOULD FIND MYSELF A CAVE

WHERE I CAN LIVE ALONE,

I'LL LEAVE BEHIND HER FLOWER PATCH

AND THE LOVE WE COULD HAVE GROWN!

SHE WON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME,

SHE'S FOUND HERSELF A HERO!

WHEN THE RIDER CAME ON THE SCENE

MY CHANCES SANK

HE'S EVERYTHING A MAN SHOULD BE:

BRAVE, TALL, AND VIRILE,

AND CONSTANCE WON'T EVEN CALL ME FRANK!

Dejected, the CANEM exits.

SCENE 7

THE GENERAL STORE

CLEM enters.

Reprise: "CRAWFORD GULH IS A MIGHTY FINE PLACE".

CLEM

CRAWFORD GULCH IS MIGHTY FINE PLACE

TO COME AND GET A BRAND NEW START,

A SIMPLE TOWN, YOU DON'T GET SHOT DOWN,

FULLA HONEST FOLKS WITH A

WHOLE LOTTA HEART...

But that heart started gettin' a mite hard. Seemed like folks was gettin' plumb loco with the whole injun terror...

ELIAS is in the general store. PARSON enters angrily waving a newspaper..

ELIAS
Howdy Parson. Ain't seen you in the store fer awhile.

PARSON
(outraged)
What in God's name are you doin'?

ELIAS
What?

PARSON
I heer'd you sold grain 'n bacon to Jack Two Trees!

ELIAS
So?

PARSON
Ain't you seen the Gazette?

PARSON hands paper to ELIAS

ELIAS
(reads)
"Comanche develop grain 'n bacon bomb!" Damn clever, them injuns!

PARSON
I tried to save that heathen! I brought him the word of God, and look how he pays us back!

ELIAS
Wait a minute! Didn't Jack help you build yer barn a few years back?

PARSON
Him and his brothers.

ELIAS
Well, yer gonna have to burn down yer barn!

PARSON
Why?

ELIAS
Booby traps!

The PARSON is horrified.

PARSON
Oh Lord! Who knows what kinda injun sneakiness he put in there!

ELIAS
And didn't he help you dig yer well?

PARSON
That's right...

ELIAS
And yer wife ain't been feelin too good recent...

PARSON
'Cause she fell in the gulch and broke her arm!

ELIAS
That's what you'd think!

PARSON
Yeah, it must be one of them extra tricky injun arm breakin' poisons!

ELIAS
Shhhh...

MAYOR enters as the panicked PARSON runs past him.

MAYOR
Well, how you doin', Parson?

PARSON
Cain't talk now Mayor! I gotta go burn down my barn, fill in my well -

ELIAS
And suck the poison outta yer wife!

PARSON exits.

ELIAS

Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR

Elias... How's business?

ELIAS

Slow. Can't blame folks who don't want to get scalped to buy some corn. Makes it tough on me, though.

MAYOR

I'm sorry to hear that, Elias, 'cause I'm here about yer loan...

ELIAS

Oh! The loan from the Bank to build the new roof! Sure came in handy after that storm. Now, I know, I'm sorry I missed a payment...

MAYOR

Two...

ELIAS

But as soon as this terror is over folks'll come back to the store...

MAYOR

And if it was up to me I'd say pay it back when you can...

ELIAS

Thanks!

MAYOR

But as President of the Bank I have a responsibility. I'm sorry, but we're gonna have to call in all our loans!

ELIAS

Call in the loans!

MAYOR

Paid in full by the end of this week!

ELIAS

But my loan contract says I only pay in full in case of pest swarm.

MAYOR

Well, ain't the Comanche swarmin' us like locusts?

ELIAS

It ain't that kinda swarm!

MAYOR

(feigning disgust)

OH MY GOD! Elias, I never knowed you was... a traitor!

ELIAS

A traitor?

MAYOR
I didn't want to believe it when people told me...!

ELIAS
What people?

MAYOR
And I told them you was no injun lovin' renegade...

ELIAS
I didn't mean -

MAYOR
But when I think of our soldiers out there, risking their lives so you can stand there, puttin' down our way of life, spittin' on our flag...

ELIAS
But-

MAYOR
How do you sleep at night?

ELIAS
I was just sayin' I don't have the money to pay the bank right now!

MAYOR
Well... a good American would keep his word, sign over his collateral...

ELIAS
The store! But my folks built this store! The Bank cain't just...

MAYOR
You ain't gonna spit on the Flag again, are you?

ELIAS
Who said that! Traitor! Go ahead, Mr. Mayor!

MAYOR pulls out contract.

MAYOR
Sign right here.

ELIAS
Will I still get to run the place?

MAYOR
Of course!

ELIAS signs.

MAYOR
And Elias?

ELIAS

Yes?

MAYOR

Put a big flag out front, so's nobody won't know yer a traitor.

MAYOR exits as ELIAS stumbles back to Store. NELLIE enters, hawking newspapers.

NELLIE

Extree! Extree! Get yer Gazette! Comanche poison well! Parson's wife near death. Government orders arrest of all Indians around Crawford Gulch!

In front of the schoolhouse. MRS. GREY and MAYOR are talking.

GREY

My loan contract says I only have to pay in case of famine!

MAYOR

Well, with all these attacks ain't we starvin' for security? Mrs. Grey, the Bank needs that money to help the government supply our brave troops as they fight fir freedom!

GREY

But I've been puttin' my own savings into books an pencils and the like at the school - I can't pay off my house loan right now!

MAYOR

Well, the war on Indian terror is expensive, Mrs. Grey. And it ain't gonna be easy.

GREY

It isn't going to be easy -

MAYOR

The west is covered with savage tribes what hate freedom!

GREY

That hate freedom -

MAYOR

And there ain't one -

GREY

Isn't one -

MAYOR

That don't -

GREY

That doesn't -

MAYOR

Hate us, and I doesn't -

GREY

Don't -

MAYOR

Kornsarnit!

Short pause.

GREY

I have no idea what that means.

MAYOR

Mrs. Grey, what kinda message does it send yer students if you don't keep yer word?

GREY

Would I have to move out of my house?

MAYOR

Course not! You'd just pay rent to the Bank!

GREY

Rent?

MAYOR

Mrs. Grey, you schooled my two daughters...

GREY

I tried to -

MAYOR

I wouldn't cheat ya. Sign right here.

MRS. GREY reluctantly signs.

MAYOR

Thanks!

MRS. GREY and MAYOR leave. NELLIE enters hawking papers again.

NELLIE

Git yer paper! Crawford Gulch Gazette! Latest news of the war!

PARSON is heard offstage.

PARSON

Nellie! Nellie!

NELLIE

Hide me, Clem! Ya gotta hide me!

PARSON enters, as NELLIE hides behind CLEM. The PARSON is now wearing a pistol, and carrying a shotgun.

PARSON
Nellie! Where are you? I ain't gonna hurt you?

CLEM
(concerned)
Uh, what's she done now?

PARSON
She's helpin' the enemy!

CLEM
How?

PARSON whispers conspiratorially to CLEM.

PARSON
Clem, did you know that all the trees in Crawford Gulch are crawlin' with Comanche?

CLEM
Comanche? I ain't seed any...

PARSON
You cain't! They're up at the top!

PARSON wildly fires shotgun in the air..

PARSON (cont'd)
And just when folks was finally takin' the threat of tree injuns serious, Nellie says she ain't seed none!

CLEM
Have you?

PARSON
I ain't got to see 'em to know they're up there!

PARSON wildly aims, fires again.

CLEM
But what if -

PARSON
Sweet Jesus, Clem! Everybody in town gotta be scalped 'fore ya'll believe there are whole tribes of injuns livin' in the trees?

CLEM
Ain't you got a big apple tree next to yer house?

PARSON
'Course! My Daddy planted it back in... Oh, Lord! I gotta go!

CLEM
Where?

PARSON
I gotta go chop down Daddy's tree!

PARSON leaves. NELLIE comes out from hiding.

CLEM
Nellie...

NELLIE
Old Man Adams said a real reporter only believes her own eyes!

BOGSPAVIN enters.

BOGSPAVIN
Here, girl! I'll take one of those newspapers!

NELLIE
Here ya go, Mr. Bogspavin!

NELLIE sells BOGSPAVIN paper.

CLEM
You stay out of trouble, Nellie!

NELLIE
Bye, Clem! I got research to do!

NELLIE and CLEM exit.

BOGSPAVIN
(reads)
"Comanche train eagles to drop biological weapons on U.S. Troops." No.
(reads)
"President Says Comanche tried to kill my Dad!..." Ah, here it is!
(reads)
"Government appoints new tribal council to sign treaties for Comanche land and resources when war is over." Yes, excellent!

RIDER enters.

RIDER
Mr. Bogspavin!

BOGSPAVIN
If it isn't the savior of the town! Did you see the latest Gazette?

RIDER
Let's see. (takes paper, opens it) Heres an interesting one - "Indian Tunnel Under Chapel Leads Back to Hotel Where Railroad Man Cyrus T. Bogspavin is Staying."

BOGSPAVIN
What? Let me see that! (grabs paper) Where - where - I don't see... oh.

RIDER
Interesting story, isn't it.

BOGSPAVIN
Coincidence! Merest coincidence! You're not implying that I secretly arrived in town months ago, brought a henchman, dug a tunnel, and staged the attack on the chapel, and the Gazette, are you?

RIDER
No. Actually I was just going to ask you who stayed in the room before you.

BOGSPAVIN
Oh.

RIDER
But now I might just have to keep my eye on you, too.

RIDER leaves.

BOGSPAVIN
Well, in that mask I'm surprised you can keep your eye on anything! This could be a problem. Jeeves!

JEEVES appears.

BOGSPAVIN
I need you to do some research, follow me.

BOGSPAVIN and JEEVES exit. MAYOR and LA TOI enter.

LA TOI
Mr. Mayor, my contract says "Pay in full only in case of Flood."

MAYOR
(impatiently)
The war is almost over!

LA TOI
What?

MAYOR
I mean, ain't we bein' flooded with terror?

LA TOI
But...

MAYOR
Besides, Bitsy, didn't nobody make you borrow money for that sign!

LA TOI
How else was I gonna let people know about "Bitsy la Toi's Bordello and Bible School?"

MAYOR

Bible School?

LA TOI

Now folks'll know just what they shouldn't do right before they go upstairs do it.

MAYOR

Bitsy, This is the time Americans must pull together... To save our country, our troops, our way of life! And every shopkeeper, every teacher, and every barber/ beautician/bible thumping hooker has do their part to save this great land!

LA TOI

(convinced)

Where do I sign?

MAYOR

Next to the x!

LA TOI signs, MAYOR exits. MRS. GREY and ELIAS enter. LA TOI, MRS. GREY, and ELIAS are brimming with jingoistic fervor.

Song: "THE PRICE OF FREEDOM"

LA TOI

I HAD TO DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE

ELIAS

THERE WAS NO TIME TO LOOSE

GREY

WITH A WAR TO BE WON

LA TOI

WE MUST ALL PULL TOGETHER

TO WEATHER THIS STORM

GREY/LA TOI/ELIAS

IT'S A MIGHTY GOOD THING

WE'RE ALL SO WELL INFORMED!

THREE CHEERS TO THOSE IN POWER,
TELLIN' US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW,
THAT HOUR BY HOUR
THE DANGER MAY GROW -

THE ENEMY IS EVERYWHERE WE TURN,
BUT, BY GOD, THERE'S SOMETHING
WE'VE ALL LEARNED:

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COUNTRY,
YOU DON'T MESS AROUND,
STICK A FLAG ON YOUR WAGON
AND STAND YOUR GROUND!
WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COUNTRY
DON'T DOUBT OR WONDER WHY
OR IT'S VICTORY -
FOR THE OTHER SIDE!

ELIAS
THEY'RE SWARMIN' US LIKE LOCUSTS

LA TOI
THEY'RE FLOODING US WITH TERROR

GREY
WE'RE STARVING FOR SECURITY

GREY/LA TOI/ELIAS
WE SIGNED OVER OUR DEEDS

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT OUR NATION NEEDS

ELIAS

AND EVEN IF FOR A MOMENT

IT DIDN'T SEEM QUITE RIGHT

GREY/LA TOI

YOU CAN'T LET YOUR QUESTIONS

WEAKEN YOUR RESOLVE TO FIGHT!

GREY

BECAUSE THE HOUR IS LATE,

IN FACT IT'S GETTING LATER

ELIAS

AND NOBODY LIKES

A FLAG SPITTIN' TRAITOR!

GREY/LA TOI/ELIAS

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COUNTRY,

YOU DON'T MESS AROUND,

STICK A FLAG ON YOUR WAGON

AND STAND YOUR GROUN!

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COUNTRY

DON'T DOUBT OR WONDER WHY,

OR IT'S VICTORY -

FOR THE OTHER SIDE!

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COUNTRY

WE ALL HAVE TO SACRIFICE -

BECAUSE FREEDOM HAS IT'S PRICE!

MRS. GREY, LA TOI, AND ELIAS march off.

Amos Glick as LUKE, Velina Brown as CONSTANCE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as BITSY LA TOI
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 8

MAIN STREET

PARSON enters with shotgun, He is fearfully looking up, ready to shoot.

PARSON
I know yer up there...you cain't hide from Jesus...I see you...

SHERIFF CANEM enters, with a suitcase. CANEM watches PARSON for a moment, then outs down his suitcase. PARSON startled by the sound panics and points the shotgun at CANEM.

CANEM
Parson! Put that thing down!

PARSON
Who are you?

CANEM
Are you crazy?

PARSON
What's the password?

CANEM
I don't know no password!

PARSON
That's cuz there ain't one! (lowers gun) I made that trick up myself. Only a injun spy would try to guess what the pass word was.

Suddenly the PARSON believes he's spotted something above them in the trees.

PARSON
(screaming)
AAAAH!

PARSON suddenly raises shotgun, firing wildly up into trees...

CANEM
You been shootin' trees all day?

PARSON
Yep!

CANEM
You gotta stop it! You shot up ole lady Klinglers' avocado tree so bad her porch is covered with guacamole.

PARSON sees CANEM's luggage.

PARSON

Going somewhere, Sheriff?

CANEM

Leavin' town.

PARSON

Fer how long? Going to get reinforcements?

CANEM

Nope - leaving for good.

PARSON

You cain't leave now! We need all the men we can git!

CANEM

Exactly. I ain't no good to you.

PARSON

Yer - yer a deserter! That's what you are! Know what happens to them?

PARSON slowly raises shotgun to aim it at CANEM. Thinking quickly CANEM points behind PARSON.

CANEM

Look! In that tree, Comanche!

PARSON spins and wildly shoots.

PARSON

(screaming)

AAAAH!

CANEM

(knowingly)

Guacamole.

CONSTANCE enters. PARSON is startled again, turns menacingly to her.

PARSON

What's the password?

CONSTANCE

What?

PARSON

Ha! An injun spy!

PARSON aims gun at CONSTANCE. SHERIFF CANEM has finally had enough.

CANEM

Parson Jones!

CANEM grabs shotgun from PARSON

CANEM
What the hell is wrong with you?

PARSON tries to wrestle the shotgun away from CANEM, who slaps PARSON.

CANEM
That there is Constance Adams!

Understanding what he was about to do the PARSON is chagrined, and finally calms down.

PARSON
I'm... I'm sorry ma'am. I just thought that, you know...

CANEM
(kindly)
Why don't you go on home, Parson.

PARSON starts to exit. CANEM points in other direction.

CANEM
Ain't yer house that way?

PARSON
Me and the family cain't stay on the farm no more - no barn, no well, all the trees chopped down - we're all 'bout to starve or freeze to death.

CANEM
Did you burn down yer cabin, too?

PARSON
No.

CANEM
Good.

PARSON
When I chopped down daddy's tree it fell on the house. Damn Comanche.

PARSON exits.

CONSTANCE
Thank you, Sheriff.

CANEM
I couldn't let that dang fool hurt you.

CONSTANCE
You fought for me.

CANEM

(proudly)

I did? Hey I did! I actually f -

At word CANEM goes all jelly again. CONSTANCE straightens CANEM up.

CONSTANCE

Sheriff! Sheriff Canem!

CANEM

Yes?

CONSTANCE

Have you seen Nellie anywhere?

CANEM

Not for awhile.

CLEM enters.

CLEM

Is the Parson gone?

CANEM

Yep.

CLEM

I put up a hammock, dang fool said it was some tree injun web, shot it to pieces.

CONSTANCE

Clem, have you seen Nellie around?

CLEM

Not since she told me she was goin' to do some research on the Comanche.

CONSTANCE/CANEM

Comanche!

CONSTANCE

I hope that girl hasn't done something foolish.

CANEM

I'll go look for her!

CANEM exits. MAYOR enters, hawking papers.

MAYOR

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

CLEM

Mr. Mayor!

CONSTANCE
What are you doing?

MAYOR
Well, where is Nellie? She should be doing this! Read the latest! "Army Occupies Comanche Land!", "Interim Tribal Council Signs Water and Mineral Rights."

CONSTANCE takes paper, reads.

CONSTANCE
"Comanche Desert Surprisingly Rich in Resources".

CLEM reads over her shoulder.

CLEM
"Government Allows No-bid Development by Railroad Baron - "

CLEM AND CONSTANCE
"Cyrus T. Bogspavin!"

CONSTANCE
But... who edited these stories? Mr. Mayor, you told me...

MAYOR
The Bank owns the Gazette now Miss Adams.

CONSTANCE
I know, but...

MAYOR
You signed the papers.

BOGSPAVIN enters.

BOGSPAVIN
Good afternoon. I see you're up on the news. So you know the war is "mission accomplished". Thank you Miss Adams.

CONSTANCE
What do you mean?

BOGSPAVIN
For all yer help! This war would have been nothing without the press.

CONSTANCE
You...you used me? Daddy's paper-

BOGSPAVIN
-fanned the fire! I just provided the spark. It takes real talent to inspire that much fear. And when Americans are afraid you can get them to do anything. Congratulations!

CONSTANCE
Well this isn't over! Now the Gazette will print the truth about you and the war!

BOGSPAVIN
Oh, I don't know. Randolph, I hear in a few years this territory's going to have congressional representation...

MAYOR
Really? Who?

BOGSPAVIN
Well it would be a wonderful opportunity for some mayor/ banker/fraternity brother to impress his family -

MAYOR
Yes!

BOGSPAVIN
Who knows? Congressmen, governor, president! But if this story got out...

MAYOR
Oh...yes...well... the Gazette couldn't print any story that wasn't fully corroborated.

RIDER enters.

RIDER
Mr. Mayor, I've got your corroboration right here!

RIDER reaches behind barrel, pulls out JEEVES in his "Indian" disguise.

INDIAN
Sorry, Mr. Bogspavin!

BOGSPAVIN pulls out a small, fancy Derringer pistol.

BOGSPAVIN
Oh, look... An Indian...

BOGSPAVIN shoots JEEVES dead.

BOGSPAVIN (Cont'd)
Sorry Jeeves. So much for your corroboration. Well, I guess it's true, the only good one is a dead one.

RIDER draws gun.

RIDER
Why you dirty...

BOGSPAVIN
Now, now, you wouldn't just shoot me down in cold blood would you? Code of the west and all.

CLEM

Shoot him!

RIDER

No, I cain't.

CLEM

I can!

CLEM reaches for RIDER's holstered gun, RIDER slaps CLEM's hand.

CONSTANCE

The Mayor may be scared, but my pa has friends in newsrooms all over the West! There are a lot of papers that will tell this story!

BOGSPAVIN

Or perhaps I'll just tell the Army that this town is full of traitors and let them deal with you!

RIDER

I have a better idea, how 'bout we meet right here - at dawn? Then we can settle this western style.

BOGSPAVIN

A gun fight! How gauche! I accept. If I win the whole town keeps quiet about my - manipulations - if you win, I'll be dead, do as you please.

RIDER

Fine.

Wind blows.

Amos Glick as BOGSPAVIN, Michael Carreiro as PARSON, Lisa Hori-Garcia as LA TOI, Ed Holmes as MAYOR, Velina Brown as CONSTANCE, Michael Gene Sullivan as RIDER- Photo by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 9

MAIN STREET, CRAWFORD GULCH

CLEM
(to audience)
So that's how it all happened. Next morning the whole town turned out to see the big Showdown of Crawford Gulch!

RIDER
Ya'll... step aside.

RIDER waves everyone to safety. Everyone exits except BOGSPAVIN and RIDER.

RIDER
Looks likes it's you and me, Mr. Bogspavin.

Really long pause. After which Clem enters, playing a guitar.

CLEM
(to audience)
Even tense the second time, ain't it?

RIDER
Any time yer ready, Mr. Bogspavin...

A tense pause. BOGSPAVIN slowly reaches for his pistol.

BOGSPAVIN
And...(suddenly stopping) I just had a thought! I wonder what do you think the Sheriff would do right now?

RIDER
Sheriff? What's he got to do with this?

BOGSPAVIN
I mean he's such a peaceful man! He could never hurt me - after what he did...

RIDER
What he did...?

CONSTANCE
What's going on?

CLEM
Shoot him!

BOGSPAVIN
Who'd a thought he's had such a bloody past...

Suddenly the RIDER begins to weaken, to turn to jelly...

PARSON

Rider!

CLEM

Shoot! Shoot!

Gloating with his power BOGSPAVIN nonchalantly turns his back to the RIDER.

BOGSPAVIN

What a bloody massacre it was! And how many Indian women and children do you think he killed? 10? 20?

RIDER

(tortured)

It... It was orders!

BOGSPAVIN

Orders? It was murder!

RIDER

(powerless, crying in emotional agony)

I'm... I'm... sorry!

The RIDER falls to his knees, pulls his mask off to reveal that he is, in fact- SHERIFF CANEM.

MAYOR

Sheriff Canem!

CONSTANCE

Sheriff! What was he -

CANEM

It was the battle of Crawford Gulch! All those years ago... It was just a Comanche village... I was just delivering a message to the colonel... I wasn't even supposed to be here!

CONSTANCE

Frank!

CANEM

(through his suffering)

She called me Frank!

BOGSPAVIN

How touching. It'll be the last thing you hear before the big pop!

BOGSPAVIN crosses to CANEM, puts gun to his head.

CONSTANCE

Hold it right there!

From out of her purse CONSTANCE has drawn gun, which she points at BOGSPAVIN.

BOGSPAVIN

What is this?

CONSTANCE

Drop the gun.

BOGSPAVIN

This was a fair fight!

CONSTANCE

No such thing as a fair fight against yer kind!

CANEM

You can't save me - I'm supposed to save you - I'm the hero!

CONSTANCE

Sometimes we gotta save each other.

By now the PARSON has also raised his rifle, pointing it at BOGSPAVIN.

ClEM
(to BOGSPAVIN)

You better git!

BOGSPAVIN surveys the situation.

BOGSPAVIN

Well, if you insist. I hate to overstay a welcome. I must toddle off anyway. There's a band of Apache near Santa Fe that must be dealt with if the railroad's going to reach the Pacific by Spring.

ClEM

I said git!

BOGSPAVIN
(trying one last time to fool them)

Listen!

CONSTANCE

We ain't fallin' for that again!

BOGSPAVIN

Have it your way.

BOGSPAVIN exits. CONSTANCE helps CANEM to his feet

CONSTANCE

Frank...

CANEM

Constance...

CONSTANCE

I don't understand! What happened to the Rider?

CANEM

He's right here. I realize now that all this time, while Frank Canem was too scared to fight, a part of me was...

CLEM strums his guitar.

CLEM

"THE RIDER OF THE SAGE!"

CONSTANCE

So, you're... crazy?

CANEM

Not any more! Now I know that I know... Wait, listen! I hear something.

PARSON

Comanche?

ALL

Comanche?

ClEM

But I thought the war was over!

CONSTANCE points into the distance.

CONSTANCE

Look! Over there! It looks like...

NELLIE enters in full Comanche regalia.

ALL

Nellie!

CONSTANCE

Where have you been?

NELLIE

Yer pa always said a good reporter goes to the source - so that's what I did!

PARSON

You talked to those savages?

CANEM

Where are they goin?

NELLIE

Army's roundin' up all the survivors, takin' 'em to a reservation up north.

CONSTANCE
They look...terrible. Those children...

PARSON
Ain't that Jack two Trees? They takin' him too?

NELLIE
He don't mind going. Said if this was an example of how Christians act in a crisis, he wants to get as far from Jesus as he can!

MAYOR
Well, good riddance to all of them! Now we can get back to business as usual.

The TOWNSFOLK, realizing how they'd been used, begin to disperse with an air of despair, resign, and defeat. Some tearfully look back at the departing Comanche.

Reprise: "BALLAD OF CRAWFORD GULCH"

CLEM
(forlornly)

CRAWFORD GULCH WAS A MIGHTY FINE PLACE

TO COME AND GET A BRAND NEW START -

ELIAS
(dejected)
Guess it's time to get to work...

MAYOR
(cheerfully checking his watch)
I'd say it is! Better open that store. You don't want to get docked on your first day working for me.

CLEM

A SIMPLE TOWN YOU WON'T GET SHOT DOWN,

FULL OF HONEST FOLKS, WITH A WHOLE LOTTA HEART -

Defeated the TOWNSFOLK begin to exit, leaving the street to the gloating MAYOR. Then -

NELLIE
Wait a minute! What's going on?

CLEM
This is the end of the Ballad of the Showdown of the Shoot Out of Crawford Gulch.

NELLIE
(disbelieving)
That's it?

PARSON
(a spark of rebellion)
What about Mr. Bogspavin?

CONSTANCE
Shouldn't we warn the Apache and Santa Fe that he's coming?

ELIAS
Why? Ain't nobody gonna believe a whole war on terror could be made up.

TOWNSPEOPLE continue to glumly disperse.

CLEM

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW...

NELLIE
(still trying to rally the TOWNSFOLK)
And what about the mayor? He bought up the whole town while ya'll were all a'scared of the Comanche!

MAYOR
(in victory)
Nothin' they can do about it now.

Despondent, TOWNSFOLK continue their exits.

All, EXCEPT NELLIE

CRAWFORD GULCH IS A -

NELLIE
Wait!

CLEM
What?

NELLIE
Stop singing! We cain't just let them win! There's gotta be somethin' we can do!

PARSON
Maybe... we could burn down the town!

CONSTANCE
Or maybe we could -

MAYOR
(trying to take control of situation)
Miss Adams - As Editor in Chief I have an idea for today's headline: "Crawford Gulch - A New Beginning." Come on, Clem!
(trying to get the others to join in)

AIN'T NO FINER PLACE I KNOW -

CONSTANCE

No!

MAYOR

(exasperated)

What?!

CONSTANCE

I ain't printin' anymore of your lies! Maybe if'n I'd printed the truth from the beginning this all wouldn't have happened. That's my fault - but I sure as heck ain't gonna say everything's fine now!

NELLIE

Yah!

MAYOR

There ya go! Spittin on the flag! Well, Miss Adams, I own yer paper and if'n you cain't take orders yer fi -

CONSTANCE

You ain't takin' Daddy's paper!

Defiant pause, then -

ELIAS

Or the store!

PARSON

Or my farm!

MAYOR

What are you gonna do?

PARSON

(raising his shotgun)

Let's burn down the Bank!

CONSTANCE

First thing we need... is a new mayor!

MAYOR

What?

NELLIE

Somebody we can trust to do what's best for us...

CANEM

Instead of takin' advantage of us when times get tough!

MAYOR

Bank still owns everything! So it doesn't matter who you elect!

CANEM

Maybe, but it's somethin' we can do right now. And if'n that don't work...

PARSON
Then we burn down the bank?

Pause, as townsfolk look at MAYOR.

CANEM
We'll see.

CONSTANCE
So, mister Mayor, one way or another...

TOWNSFOLK, EXCEPT MAYOR
(triumphantly)

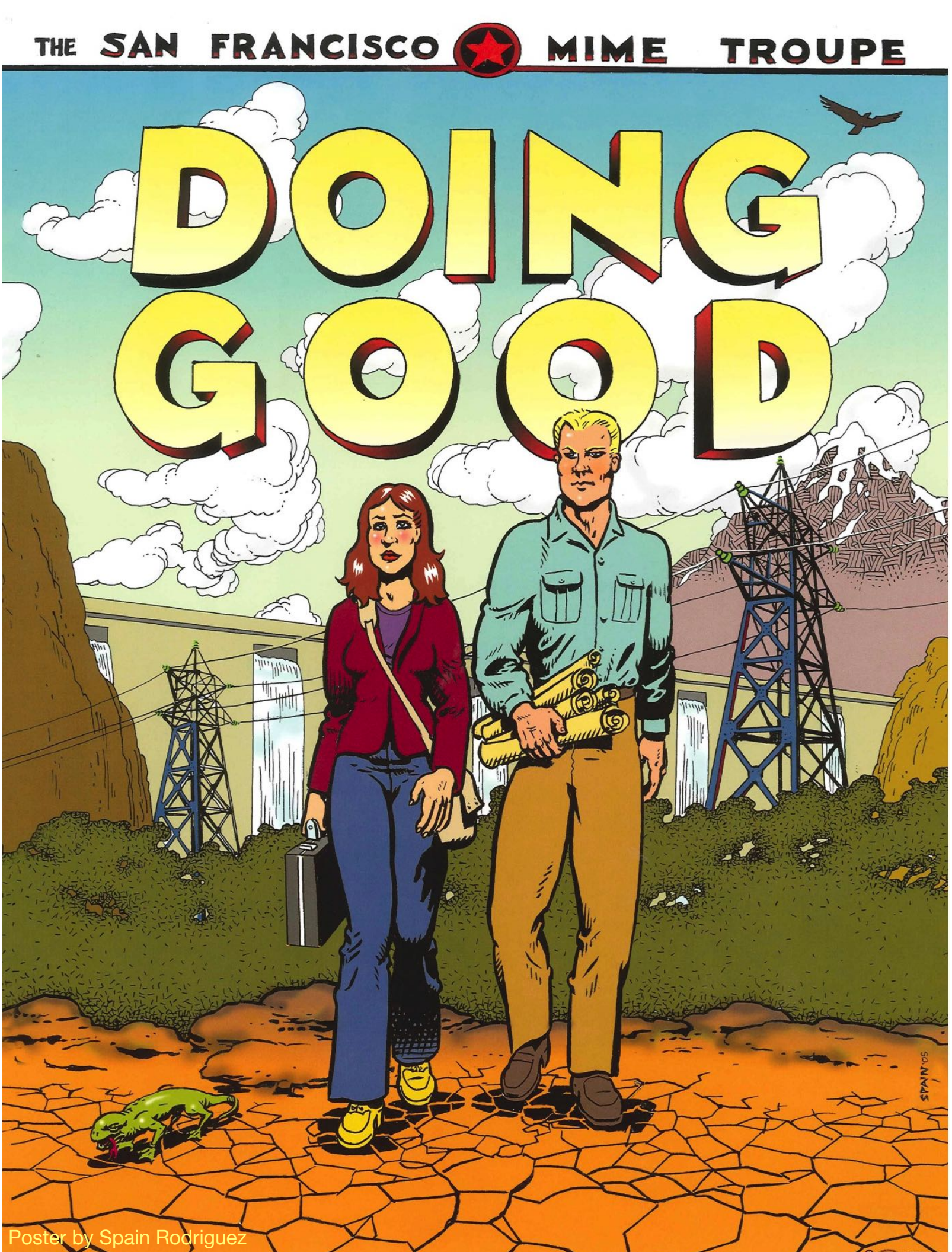
CRAWFORD GULCH WILL BE A MIGHTY FINE TOWN!

End of Play

Doing Good

Script by Erin Blackwell, Jeffrey Morris, Keiko Shimosato Carreiro, Ellen Callas, Joan Holden

Music Bruce Barthol, Pat Moran, Jason Ditzian
Lyrics by Bruce Barthol, Amos Glick



Poster by Spain Rodriguez

America has a long history of wrapping the benefits of democracy in a big fat bundle of corporate interests when we “help” some struggling country, and the privatization and sweetheart deals for American Business normally pushes any promised freedom even further down the road.

Inspired by the biography “Confessions of an Economic Hitman,” “Doing Good” is about an idealistic couple wanting to have a positive impact in a post-colonial world. Spanning from the 1970’s to the present this is a story of how the best intentions of individuals can be twisted to serve corporate hegemony, how democracy has been undermined in the name of progress, how entire nations have been ensured in perpetual debt and suffering, and shows how Disaster Capitalism is nothing new - it’s been business as usual for decades.

“After years of seeing and admiring work of the Mime Troupe I had the chance to work with them in an unexpected way: I was a teacher in the early days of the Mime Troupe’s Youth Theater Project (in those days called “Yo! Youth Speaks!”) Alongside my fellow Troupers I loved working with those students in the Bayview (a working-class district in San Francisco,) opening their minds and hearts. new skills, daring those young artist to be expressive, commit to their words and learn the power of their voices in the world. That is all we hope to do as artists. I still loved the shows but their work with youth still inspires me in a completely different way.

COLMAN DOMINGO, BROADWAY, TELEVISION, FILM ACTOR, AWARD-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Molly
James
Ray
Farivar
Bartender
Townie
Lucia
Jaime
Calderon
Wealthy Woman
Waiter
Haj
Thompkins
Merchant Woman
General
Peter
Manoush
Ashraf
Savak #1
Savak #2
Parviz
Velasco
Puppeteer
Male Demon
Man
Woman
Francois
TV announcers
Protestors

DOING GOOD opened on July 4th, 2005, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Victor Toman with the following cast:
Molly……..…Lisa Hori-Garcia*
James……..……Noah Butler*
Ray, Male Demon, Savak #1 Parviz……..…Michael Gene Sullivan*
Farivar, Jaime, Waiter, Haj, Ashraf, Savak #2..……..Christian Cagigal
Lucia, Wealthy Woman, Merchant Woman,
the Puppeteer, Francois……Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro*
Calderon, General, Velasco, Manoush, Peter, Puppeteer……Brian Rivera
Bartender, Thompkins, Townie, Man……Michael Carreiro
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

Throughout the show there will be signs (~Sign~) indicating the location, or giving pertinent facts of history.

~Sign~

History 1

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

THIS SPACE NOT FOR RENT

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

WARNING: HISTORY PLAY

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

U.S.A. FOUGHT WW II TO FREE ALL NATIONS.

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

IN 1946, HELPED FRANCE RECOLONIZE VIETNAM.

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

1954 - WE TAKE OVER FRANCE'S WAR

~Sign~ (CONT'D)

1965 - 200,000 U.S. TROOPS IN VIETNAM

PROLOGUE

A STREET, BOSTON, 1968

PROTESTERS cross with picket sign, "U.S. Out of Vietnam.".

PROTESTERS
Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go! U.S. out of Vietnam! Bring the Troops Home!

Police sirens are heard, PROTESTERS exit. RAY, a sharply-dressed, middle-aged man, and MOLLY a twenty-something, upper-middle class chic, enter in overcoats.

MOLLY
The American people are going to rise up stop this imperialist war.

RAY
If I buy you a nice dinner, you promise no political outbursts?

MOLLY
I know how to behave, Uncle Ray.

RAY
Your aunt tells me you were arrested for demonstrating.

MOLLY
I thought you two were divorced.

RAY
We're still talking to each other. Where are you taking me?

MOLLY
Some townie bar James picked. James' the first person in his family to go to college full scholarship. His Dad works in a wire mill.

RAY
What about him?

MOLLY
He decided he's not going to grad school right away. He wants to see the real world. We're both gonna sign up with VISTA this summer and go teach in Appalachia.

RAY
What's his draft board say?

MOLLY
James will not be a soldier! He's going to be a conscientious objector. The letter just came! His essay was brilliant--I typed it for him. - "The commonality of our humanity, the world soul."

RAY

What's plan B?

MOLLY

You're so cynical.

RAY

You would be too if you worked for the State Department.

MOLLY

I will never work for the Establishment.

MOLLY exits.

RAY

Right.

RAY exits.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

A BAR, BOSTON, 1968

JAMES, a twenty-something, working-class hip man, enters, crosses to the BARTENDER, who is watching television.

JAMES
Molly -my ol' lady- she's bringing her uncle to check me out. He works for the government.

BARTENDER
(watching tv)
Will you look at this garbage. *(turns up TV)*

TV VOICE
Anti-war protesters were arrested by the hundreds today for blockading draft boards. Violence erupted across the country as police restrained demonstrators.

BARTENDER
Look at those freaks! All they're demonstrating is they're a buncha cowards...

BARTENDER turns TV volume down

JAMES
You sound like my dad.

BARTENDER
You defend your country... I went. Drafted right out of high school.

JAMES
My dad stormed the beach at Normandy.

BARTENDER gives him a beer.

BARTENDER
Did my tour in '65. Central Highlands. Lost my buddy, and my hearing in my left ear.

JAMES
Rough, man. I dig this place. Reminds me of Worcester.

FARIVAR, a twenty-something man of Middle-Eastern descent enters in flashy cowboy wear.

FARIVAR
Jimmy--you're lucky I found you! Have I got a double date for us! Blonde for me, redhead for you. They're in the Mustang getting high. (dangles car keys) Wanna drive?

JAMES
What about your chemistry test?

FARIVAR
(flashes test answers) That's taken care of. Speaking of chemistry. (to BARTENDER) Rolling Rock, please.

BARTENDER
Wrong bar, Pancho.

FARIVAR
Do I look Mexican?

JAMES
Yes.

JAMES and FARIVAR crack up.

JAMES
My roommate, Farivar, from Iran.

FARIVAR
Used to be Persia.

BARTENDER
Oh!

BARTENDER opens beer, hands it to JAMES.

JAMES
Thanks man.

FARIVAR
Two hippie chicks, very lib-e-rate-d. They think we're rock stars - *(indicates self)* lead guitar, *(indicates JAMES)* drums.

JAMES
I got a girlfriend, remember? She cooked you breakfast.

FARIVAR
You gotta help me out. Just one drink. I'll bring them in. You can choose.

JAMES
No!

FARIVAR
You used to be fun.

JAMES
I fell in love. It'll happen to you.

FARIVAR
Jamais! Farivar lives and dies a cowboy. When I get back to Tehran a commissioned officer in the Air Force, (salutes) Thanks, Dad - I'll be a flyboy playboy like the Shah. Make love, not war! Weekends tooling around in the Jag, girls drooling on my flight suit. We could've been a team.

RAY and MOLLY enter.

RAY
You passed up the Ritz for this?

JAMES
Molly!?

MOLLY
James! This is Uncle Ray.

JAMES
Sir. Welcome to the Lug Nut. This is my friend Farivar.

RAY
Some of my best friends are... Persian.

MOLLY
James, it came. (produces letter)

JAMES
My student deferment never came that fast... *(hopefully)* My ticket to alternative service!

FARIVAR
If the draft board lets an atheist be a C.O.

JAMES opens the letter, reads.

JAMES
"Denied."

FARIVAR takes the letter.

FARIVAR
(reading)
"Reclassified from 2-S to 1-A upon graduation."

MOLLY takes the letter.

MOLLY
(reading)
"Report for physical at Boston Induction Center, June 15." Oh, baby.

At the bar RAY looks at the BARTENDER's faded military tattoo.

RAY

1st Cav.

BARTENDER

Drang Valley.

RAY

You guys took quite a hit. Korea. (BARTENDER nods) Thanks. (takes drinks)

TOWNIE enters excited

TOWNIE

(to BARTENDER)

Dominic, man, turn up the TV! Something big going on!

BARTENDER turns up volume on television.

TV VOICE

"Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces have launched a massive, coordinated, wave of attacks in cities throughout South Vietnam. From Hue to Saigon, U.S. troops were caught off guard. In Saigon at this hour, the newly completed US embassy is in flames. Inside the compound, Marines fend off suicide attackers."

Each viewer softly exhales a single syllable - "Whoa/Shit/Wow/ Oh/Damn."

TV VOICE

"The surprise offensive takes place during the Tet, New Year's holiday."

RAY

Smart, using Tet as a cover. They did it 200 years ago, against the Chinese. Pays to know history.

BARTENDER

Suicide attackers. You believe that? Goddamn gooks got no regard for human life!

MOLLY

Unlike Americans who burn children's flesh with napalm, defoliate the jungle, and bomb dikes so people starve? Murderers!

TOWNIE

What'd you say?

MOLLY

It takes more guts to fight barefoot in a rice paddy than to carpet-bomb from 10,000 feet!

RAY

Mol-?

MOLLY

We shouldn't even be there--it's their country!

FARIVAR

Time to go...

BARTENDER

You ain't goin' anywheres till you take back what she said.

TOWNIE

It's their country, huh, college bitch? *(MOLLY and JAMES start to reply)* My brother died for it. (this stops them) You call him a murderer.

JAMES

Don't call the lady names--she meant the rich bastards who find safe berths for their sons, who sit behind desks and pick their teeth while they pick you, and you, and me to die in the jungle. (TOWNIE hears the truth of this) Dominic lost his ear. You lost your brother. If I'm lucky I'll just lose the best years of my life. If I'm not - it's been swell.

JAMES shows them his letter.

BARTENDER

Ah, shit.

TOWNIE

Condolences, man.

JAMES

You know what? We're all Americans - except him (indicates FARIVAR), and he's our guest. We all drink the same beer, right? Let's hear it for Rolling Rock! (they cheer) Hey, look at this picture! We may be different colors, but we all love the Red Sox!

TOWNIES, JAMES and BARTENDER all cheer.

RAY

Bartender? Rolling Rocks for the house, on me.

BARTENDER

Come and get 'em.

TOWNIE & BARTENDER exit to a back room.

RAY

(to MOLLY) There's a time and a place. *(to JAMES)* Nice work, son.

JAMES

(relieved he diffused situation)

Pfoo!

FARIVAR

(suddenly remembers) The blonde and the redhead! (to JAMES) See you back at the ranch. G'night, y'all.

FARIVAR exits.

RAY
So, go north, or fight a losing war?

MOLLY
You think we'll lose?

RAY
We're on the wrong side of history. Nationalism unstoppable tide. We have two choices keep on escalating and see more soldiers die-- (MOLLY grabs JAMES) -- or declare victory and bring the troops home. When Bobby Kennedy's President, that's what'll happen.

JAMES
I'm scoring 4 hits of acid. From Wild Eddie, Blue Meanies... Drop, and stay up three nights in a row. Go in and get rejected as a complete psycho.

RAY
That 4-F, it'd stay on your permanent record. You could serve without wearing a uniform... apply for a civilian job in national defense. Automatic deferment. (JAMES shakes his head no) OK Join the Peace Corps. Not automatic, but a 95% chance.

MOLLY
See exotic lands, and save your ass!

JAMES
I'd do it if you'd come with me.

RAY
Course, you realize, to get assigned together you have to be married.

MOLLY and JAMES look at each other while it processes.

JAMES
Will you marry me, Moll? Before June 15th?

MOLLY
Yes... What I'd I just say?

JAMES and MOLLY exit.

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

A VILLAGE, THE AMAZON BASIN, 1971

~Sign~

ECUADOR HAS CHANGED GOVERNMENTS 86 TIMES SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1830. WE OFTEN HELPED

~Sign~

BANANA BOOM FADES; ECONOMY CRASHES

~Sign~

U.S. COMPANIES WIN OIL RIGHTS

JAIME, an Ecuadorean farmer enters, braiding a lasso. He is, pursued by his wife LUCIA.

LUCIA
Jaime, wait. Who's that big shot I saw you talking to in the field?

JAIME
Some politician. He didn't say.

LUCIA
Did he make you an offer on our land?

JAIME
Why you think that?

LUCIA
Manuel got an offer. Did he? (JAIME shrugs) How much? (JAIME shrugs) This is your wife asking! Is he after our land? (JAIME shrugs) What did you tell him?

JAIME
I'd think it over. (to stop her protest) We're drowning, Lucia! We're six months behind on our loan!

LUCIA
We said when we came here, we were coming for good. We all said we'd stick it out.

JAIME
The rest can stay! ì They got in that cattle program, they got their payments suspended, pero we had bad luck, so we can't get in!

LUCIA
The government has to have rules.

JAIME
Only help the ones who don't need it - Lucia, we can sell now, or wait and watch the bank take it all!

LUCIA
Let me tell the gringos, maybe they'll listen.

LUCIA and JAIME exit. JAMES and MOLLY enter carrying large boxes. They put down boxes.

JAMES
Today's gonna be great, baby! Took two years, but it's all paying off!

JAMES exits. LUCIA enters from other side of the stage. Through the next conversation MOLLY is bringing in chairs, arranging them in rows.

LUCIA
Señora Molly?

MOLLY
Señora Lucia I'm so glad to see you!

LUCIA
Señora, you and Señor James are so good to us, you have done so much for us here.

MOLLY
It's been a privilege.

LUCIA
You come all this way, so far from your family -

MOLLY
Actually, my uncle's in Quito on business. We're going in to see him. Señora, you remember when you and I argued… what we were discussing.

LUCIA
Señora that's why I'm here.

MOLLY
Now, I see now that you were right.

LUCIA
Really?

MOLLY
And I think I've figured out how we can do it.

LUCIA
Oh, Señora, Jaime will be so glad! I'll run and tell him.

MOLLY
Wait! Tell Jaime we really appreciate his interest, but at first this has to be just for women. Explain that we can't meet men as equals, until we raise our consciousness among sisters. You said husbands wouldn't like their wives meeting to discuss male oppression. But they can't object to a class on women's health. The textbook. (pulls book from the second box) A guidebook for women, by women--friends of mine, from Boston. OUR BODIES, OURSELVES. It shows how your babies were born.

LUCIA
I know how my babies were born.

MOLLY
It shows us how to love our bodies! Look, your uterus, your ovaries... your vagina...

JAMES enters.

JAMES
Honey? Lucia! The Vet's still not here.

MOLLY
What do we do?

LUCIA
Señor James'îI come to beg you. Please, make an exception, let my husband and me join the program. (JAMES and MOLLY don't know what to say) Just because we had two calves born dead this year, we can't pay our mortgage. He's thinking about selling our farm!

MOLLY
Señora Lucia, you know the Ministry sets the minimum.

JAMES
Four cows. You have -

JORGE CALDERON enters. CALDERON, wears a white hat and black, shiny boots. He has a pistol in a holster on his belt.

CALDERON
One. Unfortunately, there was a death this morning. Señor James and Señora Molly? I am Jorge Calderon.

JAMES
Senator Calderon? *(CALDERON nods)* At last!

CALDERON
(flirting)
Señora Banuelos? I noticed you this morning, when I spoke to your husband.

LUCIA
I must go, Señors. I must speak with Jaime.

LUCIA exits.

CALDERON

These campesinos are so fickle. One minute they love you, the next they are running away.

JAMES

Senator, you picked a great day to visit!

CALDERON

A trip to Pobre has been on my calendar for months.

JAMES

You know our mission to help small ranchers like Señora Banuelos and her husband overcome the special problems they face trying to raise cattle on cleared jungle land. For our first class, the Ministry of Agriculture's sending a veterinarian to teach how to avoid stillbirths through good nutrition.

CALDERON

Very important... *(to JAMES)* So, you're the Golden Gringo who has done so many wonders here. Starting a soccer team for the children with real uniforms, building this incredible schoolhouse from a pile of old bricks. Would you care for a cigar, they're Cuban?

CALDERON holds out a cigar for JAMES, who cautiously takes it.

JAMES

Thanks. I'll save it for later.

CALDERON

Why all of these empty seats? Where are your students?

JAMES

They're coming.

JAIME enters.

JAIME

Señor James, I have bad news, have you heard...

JAIME sees CALDERON, stops dead.

JAIME

(suspicious)

Where's my wife?

MOLLY

She's looking for you!

JAMES

What is it Jaime?

JAIME

The veterinarian...the one who was coming, he *(looking sideways at CALDERON)* he... had an accident.

MOLLY

Where?

JAIME

In the road.

JAMES

Let's go!

MOLLY

Is he badly hurt!

JAIME

Asasinado.

MOLLY

Murdered?

JAIME

Shot..

JAMES

By who?

JAIME rolls his eyes to indicate CALDERON.

MOLLY

Who did it., Jaime?

JAIME

(motions with his neck and says loudly) I don't know. I...I have to go, Señors, perdoname.

JAIME exits.

CALDERON

(feigning surprise) Who could have done such a terrible thing? This country is lacking in professionals. It is a pity to lose even one expert. But this is not the United States, these things happen all the time. The jungle is a very uncivilized place. My condolences. Para Serviles.

CALDERON leaves JAMES and MOLLY frightened and outraged.

SCENE 3

A HOTEL BAR, QUITO, 1971. FIVE DAYS LATER.

JAMES, MOLLY, RAY enter. RAY orders drinks.

MOLLY
So we break our promises? Abandon our friends?

JAMES
We put our friends in danger.

RAY
Calderon wants that land - it might have nothing to do with you.

MOLLY
Only that it's been our home for two years.

WEALTHY WOMAN enters, sits on bar stool, orders. She sits, notices RAY, RAY notices her. JAMES & MOLLY have their backs to her.

RAY
No government feel-good programs, no lovable volunteers have the power to overturn feudalism. How long did it take you to get here from Pobre?

BARTENDER brings WEALTHY WOMAN's drink. She places another order.

MOLLY
Three days. Ray. On a one-lane, dirt road. What if that was a highway? How far'd you have to bump down the road before you could even report that murder?

JAMES
Forty Kilometers.

RAY
What if there was a phone line to Pobre? That kind of isolation lets the Calderon types rule. What if your friend Lucia had a radio, news of a wider world? Electric light, she'd learn to read?

MOLLY
You think the United States Government's gonna -

RAY
I have an announcement. I've quit government.

MOLLY
Hallelujah!

JAMES
(overlapping) Seen the light!

Back pats, hugs, applause. BARTENDER brings RAY another drink, indicates that it came from the WEALTHY WOMAN. MOLLY and JAMES thanks him thinking he brought it on his own. RAY raises a glass to the WEALTHY WOMAN, who exits.

RAY

You're lookin' at the new Vice President of foreign relations for GainCorp. Private development company. We build dams, hydroelectric plants, power grids, roads. (playing to MOLLY) Know what's gonna make poor people's lives better? Capitalist enterprise - greedy guys trying to make a buck. That's the force driving, fundamental change.

MOLLY

Yeah...to what? *(gesturing, she spills her drink)* Dammit! I'll be right back.

MOLLY exits.

JAMES

What's "GainCorp" building in Ecuador?

RAY

Chunk of the Trans Andean pipeline. Gonna be a lot of oil to move over those mountains. I'm here to convince el Presidente that oil dollars could kick-start modernization.

JAMES

El gran cambio!

RAY

Hablas bien espanol.

JAMES

Claro que si.

RAY

Parles francais?

JAMES

Pas mal.

RAY

Italiano?

JAMES

Abbastante bene.

RAY is impressed.

RAY

So... what's next for you?

JAMES

I dunno. I never had a plan, except stay out of the wire mill. Good things always come, I just grab 'em. Trying to see what's good in Canada. We go home, I get drafted.

RAY

It's a lottery now you could get lucky...Military's not that bad. Got me out of Cleveland. Army de-segregated, sent me to college."We can use one of you in Intelligence!" How'd you get your scholarship?

JAMES

Talked too much and never stopped running.

RAY

This was a good fit. I have friends at the Peace Corp. office in D.C. Your ears should be burning. Know why you're persuasive? 'Cause you're positive. Infectious enthusiasm. Could take you places you never thought of.

On another part of the stage, in the restroom, the WEALTHY WOMAN applies make-up. MOLLY enters from a stall and mops at her clothes. Through the window is heard a sound truck blares in Spanish the voice of President Velasco.

VOICE OF VELASCO

(in Spanish)

The Yanquis will never crush us with financial blows. We must not shrink when they wave their big stick! If there is not justice for Ecuador, there will be no peace! American Imperialism must end!

MOLLY

Right on.

WEALTHY WOMAN

Oh, you're a communist.

MOLLY

I'm for schools and social programs.

WEALTHY WOMAN

President Velasco is a liar and a crook, the choice of the ignorant. Soon they won't have a choice

WEALTHY WOMAN looks disdainfully at MOLLY.

WEALTHY WOMAN

Gringos that preach revolution!

WEALTHY WOMAN exits. MOLLY studies her own stunned reflection in the mirror. The sound truck can still be heard.

VOICE OF VELASCO
(in Spanish)
Ecuador will have Ecuadorian Democracy. Fortify our national identity! Reclaim our independence, and our resources. Return Ecuador to the people. Viva Ecuador! Viva Ecuador!

Sound truck fades. WEALTHY WOMAN re-enters bar, re-establishes eye contact with RAY. From her purse she takes out a key, flashes it at RAY

JAMES
Velasco plays that Anti-American card, but he's decent... he's for the poor folks.

RAY
He's on his way out. His breed of dinosaur can't manage the change that's coming. Feel the earth moving under your feet? Whole Southern Hemisphere's shifting.

MOLLY returns to the table, now noticing the WEALTHY WOMAN.

MOLLY
That woman said something strange about Velasco.

WEALTHY WOMAN pays her bill, wraps her key in a note which she gives to the WAITER, then exits, passing RAY a final glance.

RAY
I was just about to offer your husband a job.

The WAITER delivers the note and key to RAY.

RAY
(to JAMES and MOLLY)
Message from the office. So, how'd you like to work for GainCorp., James?

MOLLY
We said after the Peace Corps. we'd go back and work for the Movement.

RAY
This would be good work that gets somewhere. James'd be helping lead the third world out of feudalism.

JAMES
Building infrastructure in poor countries.

MOLLY
Who pays for it?

RAY
They do, through loans. Same way you pay for a car or a house. They borrow to build infrastructure, infrastructure builds industry -

JAMES
Which builds income to pay back loans, right?

RAY
He's a natural. There's no risk, the loans are backed by the World Bank. (to MOLLY) Plus, strategic work'd get him deferred again. And God knows there's work for you in these countries. So many projects run by good people just crying for more help. Six months of training and you find yourself in Indonesia, Java. Think it over. We'll talk tomorrow. I have some business to do.

RAY kisses MOLLY on the cheek, shakes JAMES' hand, and exits twirling keyring on his finger.

~Sign~

VELASCO EXILED

~Sign~

PRO-U.S. JUNTA TAKES OVER

~Sign~

SONG

LUCIA enters

Song: "BIG NEWS"

LUCIA
(to audience)

BIG NEWS GUESS WHO'S BEEN SCREWED AGAIN?

IF THERE'S A STICK, I GET THE SHORT END.

WHEN ONE'S GOT NOTHING,

THERE'S NOTHING ONE GETS,

YOU WHO'VE GOT SOMETHING,

YOU'LL GET MORE YET.

DO YOU PITY US OUR DESPERATE LIVES?

DO YOU CRY?

I FEED THE CATTLE, YOU EAT THE MEAT

I CUT THE SUGAR CANE, YOU EAT THE SWEET

THE BOTTOM'S THE BOTTOM

THE TOP IS THE TOP,

AND THE TOP HAS ALL THAT THE BOTTOM HAS NOT.

AND YOU PITY US OUR DESPERATE LIVES.

FIRST YOU ROB US, THEN YOU CRY.

I WANT YOUR CAR, YOU KEEP YOUR FEET

YOU CAN WALK IN THE MUD,

I'LL DRIVE DOWN THE STREET!

AND I WONDER WHY I AM IN MY SHOES!

WHY ME ,AND WHY NOT YOU?

WHY ME, AND WHY NOT YOU?

LUCIA exits.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

A STREET, JAKARTA, 1972

~Sign~

INDONESIA PRODUCED COFFEE, RUBBER, TOBACCO, AND A LARGE STARVING CLASS UNDER DUTCH RULE, 1620-1942.

~Sign~

1960's PRESIDENT SUKARNO ANGERS FOREIGN INVESTORS

~Sign~

CIA ASSISTS COUP; 500,000 KILLED

Mid-afternoon on a street in an ex-pat neighborhood of Jakarta. MOLLY is in a bajai (scooter cab) being driven by HAJ.. MOLLY has a scarf on her head and a pair of sun glasses on. We hear the scooter, and actors lean as if turning, stopping etc.

MOLLY
(reading a piece of paper)
Jalan Jenderal, Surdiman Kav 31.

HAJ
UNICEF! Downtown. You living round here?

MOLLY
Up the hill. Land of tea parties!

We hear bicycle bell. HAJ honks.

HAJ
Out of my way!

MOLLY
Look out!

We hear chickens being hit, squawking, and scattering.

HAJ is maneuvering around pedestrians and cars... we hear others honking at him. As if brushing feathers off his face, and responds to the owner of the chickens

HAJ
Get your chickens out of the road! This a modern country! *(to MOLLY)* You work at UNICEF?

MOLLY
Starting a campaign. Teaching Mothers to nurse babies.

HAJ
They don't know?

MOLLY
Nestles' sends women dressed up like nurses, to tell them "Powdered formula's better".

HAJ
Ah. (stops, shouts at another driver) You blind? Go back to countryside! (starts moving again) Americans like very much to do good!

MOLLY
Yes! Could you slow down a bit?

HAJ
Ah! Bazaar!

MOLLY
Stop please.

HAJ stops.

HAJ
O.K., Lady!

MOLLY
I'm Molly.

HAJ
Haj. O.K. Mrs. Molly. I wait for you. No extra charge.

MOLLY
I could be a while. (as she pays him) I'd feel guilty. You go on.

HAJ
No other driver like Haj!

MOLLY
I'll take my chances.

HAJ
O.K.

HAJ bows, walks off. MERCHANT WOMAN enters, with fabric in basket and a baby carrier on her front.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Hey Lady! Batiks?!

MOLLY tries bargaining in rudimentary Bahasa Indonesia

MOLLY
Berapa harga? (how much is?)

MERCHANT WOMAN
You like?

MERCHANT WOMAN holds up ten fingers twice.

MOLLY
Twenty thousand rupiahs? Cantik.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Pretty, yes.

MOLLY
But ...ah...Mahal. (*beautiful but expensive)*

MERCHANT WOMAN
No, no expensive. Special piece. All hand dyed.

MOLLY
Sepulhuribu rupiah.

MERCHANT
10,000? Very special. Me, I do. 15,000.

MOLLY
Ti dak.

MERCHANT WOMAN's baby dries.

MOLLY
Baby, Cantik. Laki-laki atau perempuan?

MERCHANT
He girl. Friend lady. I like you.

MOLLY
I like you too. 10,000.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Silakan. No one else make.

MOLLY
10,000.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Ti dak, ti dak. O.K. 14,000.

MOLLY
Ti dak.

MOLLY, as a bargaining tactic, feigns leaving.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Silakan, Silakan. For you, 11,500 rupiahs!

MOLLY
10,000.

MERCHANT WOMAN
10,500!

MOLLY
O.K. 10,500. (pays)

MERCHANT WOMAN
Batik!

Baby cries, WOMAN starts to bottle feed baby.

MOLLY
You always give her a bottle?

MERCHANT WOMAN returns to selling.

MERCHANT WOMAN
(to passersby)
Batiks!

MOLLY
You don't? (indicates breastfeeding) What's in the bottle?

MERCHANT WOMAN
(to a passing shopper)
Hey lady!

WOMAN doesn't understand. MOLLY points.

MOLLY
Nestles'.

MERCHANT WOMAN
(understands, smiles)
Nestles'... Baby like. (back to work) Batiks! Hey Mister!

MOLLY
(looking around)
Does anybody speak English?

The MERCHANT WOMAN spots a potential customer, races after him.

MERCHANT WOMAN
Hey Mister! You like Batik? Hey Mister, special piece. Best price!

MERCHANT WOMAN exits. HAJ enters having heard MOLLY call.

HAJ

Mrs. Molly? UNICEF?

MOLLY

Yes.

MOLLY get back in HAJ's taxis as HAJ looks at the batik MOLLY purchased.

HAJ

Nice. How much you pay?

MOLLY

10,500. When I first got here I always paid too much. Where do these women get their water?

HAJ

From the river. 10,500 in Dollars U.S.?

MOLLY

Two dollars. Unbelievable. I've got to come back.

HAJ

In my village, ladies make this kind. They need one month.

MOLLY

One month?

MOLLY and HAJ exit IN cab.

ACT TWO

SCENE 2

A GOVERNMENT MINISTRY, JAKARTA, 1972 SOME DAYS LATER.

Under music, JAMES and THOMPKINS, a frumpy, tired-looking middle-aged man, are shown into a Ministerial office. THOMPKINS has a hesitant, almost stuttering way of speaking. THOMPKINS is looking over some plans.

JAMES
Thompkins - I've met the General my dog knows more about economics. Why's this man Development Minister?

THOMPKINS
Ahh, he knew when to change sides. They, ah, needed someplace to put him. I'm, ah, glad he's late these f..f..figures! I guess you f..f..followed the f..formulas the company t..taught you in training?

JAMES
And the numbers come out great! You know... I've never done this before!

GENERAL, a brusque, heavily medaled man in a uniform, enters.

GENERAL
James!

JAMES
General!

GENERAL
Forgive me for making you wait. We really must do something about the traffic.

JAMES
This way I got a chance to admire your pictures! Is that -

GENERAL
Yes! Yes, me with Sid Caesar.

GENERAL indicates another picture.

GENERAL
Your President Johnson. Gave me a Cowboy hat!

JAMES
I recognize your lovely wife.

GENERAL
She asked me specially to tell you, she would like to meet your wife. She loves the chance to practice her English, and catch up on the latest trends.

JAMES
I'll tell Molly.

GENERAL looks to THOMPSON.

GENERAL
Ah, nice to meet you Mr?...

JAMES
Oh, God I'm sorry. This is my associate, Chief Electrical Engineer for GainCorp, Bill Thompkins.

GENERAL and THOMPKINS shake hands.

JAMES
For numbers, he's the best! But first, Bill, I just want to tell the General the good news!

THOMPKINS
Ah...

THOMPKINS unrolls spreadsheet which reads WONOGIRI DAM, PROJECTED ELECTRICAL OUTPUT.

JAMES
We have three American banks, two Japanese banks, and the biggie, Texaco all agreeing to become lenders. We needed one billion, we've got two! No need to skimp. We can add access roads! Bill?

THOMPSON nervously puts on his reading glasses, clears his throat .

THOMPKINS
The dam itself will cover, ah, 8,800 hectares. Ahh, irrigation capacity should be about, ah, 23,000 hectares, with, ah, eventual turbine capacity of, ah, 124 megawatts. That's, ah, assuming there are no, ah, geological surprises.

JAMES
Enough output to power your next decade of growth, for only 1.8 Billion U.S. dollars. Ten years, those cyclos will all be cars. That whole skyline will be skyscrapers, those street kids will be in school.

GENERAL
But presently, we are still a poor country. 1.8 billion - that is one quarter of our gross national product. I fear we cannot manage it.

JAMES
GainCorp wants your country to succeed. We can bend a bit. 1.7 billion. Now check out these growth projections.

JAMES hands GENERAL a dossier. GENERAL reads, stops stunned at a certain page.

GENERAL
"Projected GNP growth of 17%"!

THOMPKINS coughs.

GENERAL
Is that possible?

THOMPKINS
No. I'd, I'd say more like seven percent.

GENERAL looks back and forth between the two men questioningly.

JAMES
General, GainCorp. put Bill and me together because we are Yin and Yang. Thanks for your presentation, Bill. I know you've got a tight deadline on that new Luzon Power Grid deal.

THOMPKINS
Yes, yes I do. General Widodo...

JAMES
See you back at the office.

THOMPKINS
Right, Jim.

THOMPKINS exits.

JAMES
1.65 billion is the best we can do.

GENERAL
That's still a very big loan.

JAMES
The beauty of it is, you don't even start paying it back for ten years, and it doesn't come due till 1997! By then, two billion will be nothing for this country.

General.
But if for some reason. -

JAMES
An emergency loan, that's what the World Bank is there for. But that won't happen. Takes a visionary leader to bring his people to the First World table.

GENERAL
That is my dream. But unfortunately, I am an old man...

JAMES
That's not what the ladies say. I was watching you at the party!

GENERAL
What can they see in me?

JAMES
So, shall we -

GENERAL
Sad... to think I may not live to see my dream come true.

JAMES
Ten years is all it'll take.

JAMES pulls out Letter of Agreement for the GENRAL to sign, but the GENERAL seems strangely disinterested.

GENERAL
What I must think of is taking care of my family...

JAMES finally picks up the GENERAL's hint.

JAMES
Ah.

GENERAL
(offers a cigar to JAMES) From a Dutch friend of mine. A gift. It's Cuban.

JAMES
So kind of you. Thank you...

Thinking on his feet JAMES improvises.

JAMES
General... GainCorp has delegated me to offer you a special position - Supervisor for Military Relations. Full-time salary, with not many duties.

GENERAL
I accept.

JAMES offers the GENERAL a pen.

JAMES
Sign here.

GENERAL signs Letter of Agreement.

JAMES
For the loans, you'll sign with each bank.

JAMES gathers up the signed documents.

JAMES
Been a pleasure, General.

JAMES exits.

GENERAL

He is learning.

GENERAL exits.

~Sign~

INDONESIA BORROWS $9 BILLION

~Sign~

$2 BILLION UNACCOUNTED FOR

ACT TWO

SCENE 3

A MANSION, JAKARTA, 1973

A cocktail party at a very upscale home. Music is playing as party guests dance and mingle. MOLLY, GENERAL enter.

MOLLY
(to the GENERAL)
My team at UNICEF has drawn up a code of Ethics. We've got to stop Nestles' from selling baby products that kill.

GENERAL
(feigning concern to impress)
Yes! Our children are most precious.

JAMES and PETER, an American businessman, enter, laughing.

MOLLY
(to JAMES)
We need government inspectors to make sure Nestles' follows through. I thought... The General would be able to set that up -

GENERAL
(smiling)
Hmm...May I refresh you drink?

Music JAMES holds some paper as he hard sells PETER, a no-illusions American businessman, on the project. PETER cuts him off.

PETER
So the fuss is over, and the villages will be cleared?

JAMES
Relocation starts next month. The farmers get better land-- everybody wins.

THOMPKINS enters, drunk with a full glass.

JAMES
Tell your investors in Hong Kong they can draw plans and start shopping for real estate.

THOMPKINS bumps into MOLLY, who notices how drunk he is.

MOLLY
Bill, you should eat something. James!

THOMPKINS
(embarrassed)
I, ah -

MOLLY heads off, THOMPKINS drinks. GENERAL crosses with PETER. MOLLY meets JAMES.

JAMES
Peter's bringing in 10,000 jobs! Talk to him.

MOLLY
First the Health Minister. Oh, the General thinks I have delicious skin.

JAMES
He's right. That guy that just came in? He's from Bechtel. Gotta head him off!

JAMES leaves MOLLY

MOLLY
Half an hour! We have a date with Haj.

Before JAMES can get away THOMPKINS intercepts him.

THOMPKINS
(drunk and desperate)
James! I gotta speak with you.

JAMES
Thompkins. Monday. *(pushes THOMPKINS aside)* People to talk to!

GENERAL appears, puts his arm around JAMES.

GENERAL
The Provincial Governor remains unhappy...

JAMES
I'll meet with him.

GENERAL
He does not require a meeting just a... thank you...

JAMES pulls out stuffed envelope, hands it to GENERAL.

JAMES
Convey it for me.

MOLLY is fundraising to PETER.

MOLLY
The Health Ministry might be more receptive, if we could tell them we also have private donors. Foreign business people who contributed to the campaign would win a lot of good will...

PETER
Business, going in for good works. Such an American idea, isn't it?

JAMES and GENERAL laugh and exit. THOMPKINS follows them out.

PETER

Your husband's a charming fellow.

MOLLY

I know.

PETER

He'd better be, with the numbers he's selling. How do you enjoy life in Djakarta?

ACT TWO

SCENE 4

A MARKET STREET, JAKARTA, 1973

MOLLY, JAMES, and HIJ enter. HAJ is leading the other two through an Indonesian Night Market. We hear bicycle bells ringing, scooter horns, chickens, a bus, children's voices. JAMES is in the middle of making a point to MOLLY.

JAMES
– sometimes you have to enhance the figures. Sometimes – okay, now I'm gonna tell you something – you have to grease palms.

MOLLY
You do that?

JAMES
To keep government from getting cold feet. What's more important stay squeaky clean, or get this country humming with electricity?

MOLLY
I guess electricity.

JAMES takes MOLLY's hand, kisses it.

JAMES
Mmm--good smells!... Coconut?

HAJ
Putu.

JAMES
Haj, partner where's this surprise?

HAJ
You will hear before you see.

HAJ points out buildings.

HAJ
Those buildings? That one, Dutch, 1600s. That one Portuguese,1500s... That one, maybe 1400s. Classic Javanese.

JAMES
It looks Moorish.

HAJ
Arabs came also. That one –

HAJ stops, bows and makes honorific gesture.

HAJ
– there many people died.

MOLLY
(sotto voce)
In 1965? In the coup?

HAJ nods

JAMES
(sotto voce)
Is it true the CIA made that happen?

Suddenly there is a clamor of gongs, gamelan bells and drums. The theater troupe arrives, all masked -

A young MAN, poor but honest, handsome hero. A young WOMAN, she too is from the peasant class. A clever and beautiful heroine. MALE DEMON, (Based on character Ramda?) pure evil, greed, hunger and lust. Ugly with fangs protruding from upper and lower jaw, long curved fingernails. The DEMON is very energetic. Presenting it all is a PUPPETEER.

HAJ
These are students. They try to do Wayang – traditional Indonesian performance – but different.

PUPPETEER
Selamat malam. Good evening. Tonight we shall see how evil comes to the world of man. And good fights back in the never ending battle.

The young couple celebrate their wedding day, happy to begin their new life together. The DEMON enters and does a short solo dance of greed and hunger, but cannot deter the couple from finding happiness.

The couple now have children, flat rod puppets, operated by the PUPPETEER. They do a dance of family love.

The DEMON now dons a red, white and Blue top hat – becoming a representation of Uncle Sam – and invades the family dance, beats the MAN, and grabs the children. The rod puppets are reversed, revealing on their backs representations of the countries of Southeast Asia – Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia.

The DEMON devours them one by one, (amidst much musical cacophony)... As he begins to devour Indonesia, the MAN recovers and fights the monster. He receives a mortal wound and lies dying... The WOMAN fights the Monster with a rage fueled by grief. In the end she skewers Uncle Sam with a puppet stick. An invisible crowd cheers, and begins to chant.

OFF STAGE CROWD
Yankee go home! U.S. out of Vietnam!? Asia for Asians!? Stay out of our country!

MOLLY is frightened by the play and the crowd, but is defiant in her self-righteousness.

MOLLY
(to crowd)
No, I won't go home!

JAMES sees the tenor of the crowd, tries to pull MOLLY away.

JAMES
Mol -

MOLLY
We're not all Uncle Sam! Some of us are here trying to do good!

MOLLY'S anger sparks more from the crowds, and HAJ has to rush the two off

HAJ
This show makes people too excited.

MOLLY
Can we please go back to the apartment?

HAJ
Sure. Come, we go.

JAMES
Never mind - we'll get a cab. Taxi!

HAJ
What time tomorrow, boss?

MOLLY exits.

JAMES
Maybe next week.

JAMES exits.

HAJ
Sometimes I like Westerners. Then I wish to know how bad are they. I try many tests. Some tests, those two pass. Not this...

HAJ sees potential customer offstage.

Hey mister – you want see market?

HAJ exits.

ACT TWO

SCENE 5

AN APARTMENT HOUSE LOBBY, JAKARTA, 1973

JAMES and MOLLY enter. Unseen by them THOMPKINS is seated upstage, nursing a bottle of good Irish Whiskey

JAMES
I'm just working my ass off, 14 hours a day, to bring them what we have!

MOLLY
Why do they hate us?

THOMPKINS
Ah, James! Monday's not soon enough - (bowing) Lovely Molly...

MOLLY
Bill... I'm sorry. I've got to get out of these heels. Goodnight.

MOLLY exits.

JAMES
'Night.

THOMPKINS
James, my colleague. Somep'n you needa know –

JAMES
What's that?

THOMPKINS
You tell me. Who am I?

JAMES
A great engineer.

THOMPKINS
Hah! I'm a white man in Asia! Yeah. I love it here. Hey! Where's my coffee plantation?

JAMES
Bill, you should go home.

THOMPKINS
Yeah. What are we doing here? What do we do here, James? Anh?

JAMES
We build things the country needs.

THOMPKINS
Thass where you're wrong. Thass what GainCorp.'s got you thinkin'. What we do here is, we push loans. What do loans, do, James?

JAMES
Loans make dreams possible! Did you ever buy a house?

THOMPKINS
Nope.

JAMES
A car?

THOMPKINS
Once.

JAMES
How'd you buy the car? You took out a loan. Without the car, you couldn't work. Without a house, you end up with nothing to leave your kids....

THOMPKINS
No kids.

JAMES
Loans make things grow. A bridge is a car. A Dam is a house.

THOMPKINS
Damn this house!

JAMES
You feel that way, why are you still here?

THOMPKINS
I go home... I'm nobody... square zero. I don't know how to live there. James. Lissen...

THOMPSON tries to clear his head, then speaks slowly.

THOMPKINS
What do you think really happens when the dams and bridges are all built all shiny and new, and the friggin' country can't pay back the loans?

JAMES
They pay them back-- it just takes a bit longer...

THOMPKINS
They never get out of debt! ...And then whoosh-- in flies the IMF....We'll help you - on condition. Free your market... let foreign companies in. Get protection...let America build bases... Yeah. The IMF will tell this backwards country how to tie their shoes and when to shit! The loans are a trap, and we set it, you and me.

THOMPSON sees JAMES' incredulous reaction

THOMPKINS
Uh-oh, I made you mad.

JAMES
Been a long night, Bill.

THOMPKINS
You hadda know. Get upstairs to the wife. She's pretty.

JAMES
Let me get you a cab.

THOMPKINS
I'm OK. (starts to stagger off) Go on, get some sleep while you still can. See you at the office!

They exit opposite ways. HAJ enters.

~Sign~

SONG

HAJ

Song: "A KIND MAN TURNS CRUEL"

HAJ
(to audience)

FIRST CLASS FLIGHTS AND 5 STAR HOTELS

TEND TO CLOUD THE VISION.

ONE CANNOT SEE REALITY

WHEN IT THREATENS ONES POSITION.

YES, THE LOGIC OF AN ARGUMENT

IS OFTEN HARD TO HEAR

WHEN THE RATIONAL CONCLUSION

IMPACTS ONE CAREER.

A KIND MAN TURNS CRUEL

WHEN HIS PROSPECTS ARE RESTRICTED,

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN COMFORT

DO NOT CARE TO BE AFFLICTED.
THE BOOK OF TRUTH IS HEAVY
BEST KEEP IT ON THE SHELF,
READING COULD CAUSE GREAT HARM
TO ONE'S OPINION OF ONES' SELF.

A KIND MAN TURNS CRUEL
WHEN HIS PROSPECTS ARE RESTRICTED
FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN COMFORT
DO NOT CARE.

A KIND MAN TURNS CRUEL
WHEN HIS PROSPECTS ARE RESTRICTED
FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN COMFORT
DO NOT CARE TO BE AFFLICTED.

HAJ exits.

~Sign~

FIVE YEARS PASS

ACT THREE

SCENE 1

A SMALL OFFICE, PANAMA CITY, 1978

~Sign~

PANAMA SECEDED FROM COLOMBIA IN 1903, BACKED BY U.S.

IN 1904, AGREED U.S. SHOULD BUILD A CANAL.

~Sign~

U.S. CONTROLS PANAMA CANAL.

~Sign~

TORRIJOS NEGOTIATES NEW CANAL TREATY; GAINS SOVEREIGNTY

MOLLY enters, talking on phone.

MOLLY
(on phone)
Planned Parenthood Panama is asking for your help to fund a special campaign to reach low-income teenage girls, 13-18--do you have a daughter?.... Of course, I'm sure she wouldn't, but some do... the Church? Some padres preach against us, others secretly thank us... Oh, thank you, Señor Ibarra--you have just done so much good! My replacement will contact you.

MOLLY hangs up, celebrates, turns to see JAMES entering with suitcases.

MOLLY
James! You came straight from the airport?

JAMES
Hi, honey. Saudi never changes. Nigeria's a mess. Do you want to go back to the apartment and conjugate Swahili?

MOLLY
I have fantastic news! South End Press wants to hire us both! I know half the people. They loved your resume. They're a collective. They publish books no one else will touch! They want me for Development Director, and you to do national sales!

JAMES
Pays what?

MOLLY
Equal salaries--$10,000 a year! And guess what! I talked to Mom and Dad. They don't want us throwing away money on rent. They'll give us the down

payment on a house--a little one, in a low-cost neighborhood--Mom's already looking in Jamaica Plain!

JAMES
Jamaica Plain's a dump! My cousins live there.

MOLLY
OK, I don't care where! I don't even care what job! All I care about is we're going home!

JAMES
Honey, won't you be sad to leave Panama? Torrijos... really turning this country around! I mean, we finally meet an honest dictator...

MOLLY sense something about JAMES. Clearly they had agreed to return to the U.S.

MOLLY
What's changed?

JAMES
(sheepishly)
Ray really wants me to go to Iran.

MOLLY
You promised you wouldn't! I've been telling everybody.

JAMES
They want to make me head of the whole Mid East region! Give me a big raise and a bonus...

JAMES sees MOLLY is disappointed.

JAMES
Okay, I'll tell them "just for a year.". You know what? Could we go to the apartment and argue about this? (flirting) A whole month...

MOLLY
You haven't asked me about my trip to Ecuador.

JAMES
(indifferently)
Oh, yeah--how was that?

MOLLY
There's a highway to Pobre now.

JAMES
We built it!

MOLLY
Pobre's gone. No farms, no meetinghouse. Just huge drills, swimming pools-sized-sized pits of burning oil. Lucia lives in a tin shack in a shanty town outside Quito.

JAMES
Fact is, when a country has to accumulate capital, somebody gets screwed at first, usually the poor.

MOLLY
I know the argument.

JAMES
Lucia's kids will have good jobs.

MOLLY
That village in Java was supposed to get good land.

JAMES
Their government screwed them, not us.

MOLLY
James. Why is it that everywhere GainCorp goes, there's just been or there's about to be a coup?

JAMES
Politics.

MOLLY
And, is it just an amazing coincidence that all those countries have oil?

JAMES
You're talking about stuff you don't understand. That's what I love about you.

MOLLY
James, did you get Bill Thompkins fired???

JAMES
He was a drunk. He kept messing up my presentations!

Phone rings. MOLLY answers.

MOLLY
Planned Parenthood Panama.....really? Now? Thanks. (hangs up) Turn on the TV.

JAMES turns on the television. On air is a BBC news broadcast.

TV VOICE
"In Tehran, capital of Iran, thousands of protestors took to the streets today to burn effigies of the Shah and U.S. President Jimmy Carter. The Army shot

hundreds of demonstrators in historic Jaleh Square. The Shah has declared martial law

MOLLY
The country's falling apart.

JAMES
We're gonna fix it.

MOLLY
Iran is not Panama! Omar Torrijos invited you here--those people (pointing at tv screen) don't want what you're selling! They don't want you!

JAMES
That's what makes it a challenge.

MOLLY
I'm going home, I want to be where most people don't hate me. I want to be where I'm needed.

JAMES
I need you.

MOLLY
Quit.

JAMES
I can't. I'm the only one who can speak Farsi...sorta... One year and that's it, I promise. I can't join some collective with a buncha furry freaks in Birkenstocks. And live on lentils in some "low-cost neighborhood"--that's not a big adventure for me!

MOLLY
You can't give up the money.

JAMES
Easy to say when your parents are rich. I didn't grow up in an architect-designed house, with art on the walls and a maid! Excuse me, a "cleaning lady". I can't afford to be right all the time! Why do I always have to be judged? Look I talk to Presidents! I love my job. I love my life. I love my wife -

MOLLY
But you can't give up having clout. You can't give up being the big man.

JAMES
I didn't ask you to quit your two-bit job.

MOLLY shoves JAMES, walks out.

JAMES
I'm sorry! Hey. It's just for one year, tops -

~Sign~

TORRIJOS DIES IN MYSTERY PLANE CRASH

ACT THREE

SCENE 2

A STREET, TEHRAN, 1978. ONE MONTH LATER.

~Sign~

IRAN WAS OVERRUN BY GREEKS, MONGOLS, ARABS, TURKS, RUSSIANS, AND BRITISH. WE CAME IN 1941.

~Sign~

PRIME MINISTER MOSSADEQ NATIONALIZES OIL

~Sign~

CIA OUSTS MOSSADEQ

Two STREET PROTESTORS enter with flags.

PROTESTORS
Down with the Shah! Death to the Shah! Down with the Shah! Allahu Achbar! Down with America!

RAY and JAMES enter. RAY is cautious, steering JAMES, who keeps stopping. JAMES is clearly upset.

RAY
Just a block to the hotel.

JAMES
It started in Saudi, when she couldn't go out alone.

RAY
Yeah, with my wife it was Guatemala.

JAMES
I can't eat, I can't sleep. I don't know where I am. I don't know who I am.

RAY
Sure your'e up to this? I could get Charlie Delano. He's not you, but -

JAMES
Work's the only thing that holds me together.

RAY and JAMES exit.

OFF STAGE VOICES
Down with the Shah! Death to the Shah! Down with the Shah! Allahu Ackbar! Down with America!

ACT THREE

SCENE 3

A TRANSPORT MINISTRY, TEHRAN, 1978

Protestors are heard. Buzzer. MANOUSH, a government official, enters, carrying a golf club. He presses an intercom button.

MANOUSH
(into intercom)
Yes, Ashraf?

ASHRAF
(intercom)
Excellency, Tehran University students broke windows protesting your speech.

MANOUSH
Double my body guard... Any word from Zurich?

ASHRAF
(intercom)
Credit Suisse needs your OK to release funds to your wife.

MANOUSH
Get Roland on the phone.

ASHRAF
(intercom)
Will do, Excellency... Excellency, your three o'clock appointment.

MANOUSH
He's late!

MANOUSH swings golf club life-threateningly. JAMES enters with map.

JAMES
Manoush! It took an hour to cross town -- dodging barricades. Is this the best time to talk about roads?

MANOUSH
The perfect time. (shows him golf club) A gift from your competitor, Autobahn For Alles. Personally, I find gold-plate ostentatious.

JAMES
Tacky.

MANOUSH
What do you have?

JAMES unrolls map.

JAMES
Ten thousand miles of primo driving surface - from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf - transports Iran into the twentieth century. For a meager five hundred million American.

MANOUSH
(pointing with golf club)
The generals are begging for this. Highways allow rapid troop deployment to the nation's trouble spots. Alas! We're out of money... Oil workers have joined the general strike. The noble resource has stopped pumping.

JAMES
Tourist dollars provide built-in financing. Ruins make ideal destination points. "Persepolis – 300 Kilometers." Four seventy-five.

MANOUSH
My dream! Connect Iranians with the glories of our Persian past. Best Western needs a Mid-Eastern niche, I could get the franchise. But we can't bring in skilled foreign labor - the streets are full of unemployed farmers.

JAMES
Boom in car sales creates jobs. Can you help it of you own GM stock? Four fifty.

MANOUSH
Three fifty.

JAMES
I'll be back in six weeks to see the next transportation minister.

JAMES begins to exit.

MANOUSH
(sarcastically)
I hear some of the mullahs can be quite reasonable.

MANOUSH chuckles, goes back to practicing his swing.

MANOUSH
Jim, Jim, I'm not going anywhere. The army's backing the bureaucrats. Au revoir, Shah.

JAMES
Four hundred.

MANOUSH
Such a reasonable price! But my annual budget goes to servicing debt. Nixon and Kissinger sent the Shah on a spending spree. He didn't buy infrastructure. Nothing you sold us makes any money.

JAMES
We should've built roads first. That's a planning error we can correct.

MANOUSH
A cynical man would say the U.S. wants us on our knees. I'm not a cynical man, I went to Columbia University.

JAMES
OK--three fifty!

MANOUSH
You could sell carpets in the bazaar. Have a cigar. They're Cuban.

As MANOUSH pulls out cigar two threatening men, SAVAK #1 and #2 enter in silk suits, loud ties, and shades.

SAVAK #1
Sorry to interrupt, Excellency. *(to SAVAK #2)* The golf club.

SAVACK #2 grabs golf club from MANOUSH.

SAVAK #2
It's a matter of some urgency.

MANOUSH
(imperiously)
In 1953 when the Shah ran away to Rome, Kim Roosevelt begged me to help the CIA overthrow Mossadeq. You can't arrest me.

SAVAK #1
Who's arresting you?

MANOUSH
(aside to JAMES)
SAVAK - secret police!

JAMES
We're doing business!

SAVAK #2
We merely wish to... talk.

JAMES
About what?

SAVAK #1
Loyalty to the Shah.

MANOUSH
I put the Shahanshah on his peacock throne!

SAVAK #2
Contacts with revolutionaries.

JAMES
Manoush? He's a businessman.

SAVAK #1
In business for himself.

JAMES
I'm calling the Palace.

SAVAK #1 hits JAMES with golf club.

SAVAK #2
We're from the Palace.

MANOUSH
I'm a dead man.

JAMES
The American Embassy -

SAVAK #1 hits JAMES in the stomach.

SAVAK #2
Ninety-nine percent of injuries occur when the victim resists.

MANOUSH
If they don't kill me, they'll torture me till I wish I were dead! Call my wife!

SAVAK #1 and SAVAK #2 drag MANOUSH out. Sound of car. JAMES staggers into street, trying to remember the license number of the SAVAK car.

JAMES
4M73X4. No! 4N78X4. (to invisible passers-by) Did anyone see three men get into that white van? It's a matter of life and death. Does anybody speak English? God dammit. Taxi!

PARVIZ, dressed as one of the anti-Shah rioters enters, faces JAMES, who assume she is about to be attacked.

JAMES
Oh no you don't! I'm an American!

JAMES prepares to take a swing at PARVIZ, who pulls out a gun.

PARVIZ
(with a thick accent)
How about a Rolling Rock.

JAMES
(stunned)
Did you say Rolling Rock?

PARVIZ indicates that, JAMES should follow him, and exits. After a moment JAMES does.

ACT THREE

SCENE 4

A ROOM IN A VILLAGE, OUTSKIRTS OF TEHRAN, 1978.

Sunset, the same day.

PARVIZ brings on JAMES, who is wearing a blackout hood. From other side, FARIVAR limps on FARIVAR is now bearded, and wearing a turban and mullah's robes.

FARIVAR
(to PARVIZ)
I told you not to hurt him.

PARVIZ
SAVAK.

FARIVAR
SAVAK hit an American? Whose side are they on?

FARIVAR pulls hood off JAMES, who immediately starts talking. JAMES does not recognize FARIVAR.

JAMES
(to himself) I guess everyone thinks it can't happen to them. *(to FARIVAR and PARVIZ)* GainCorp has a policy of rapid, reasonable response. In my wallet on my business card there's a phone number, ask for Charlie Peterson. He'll take care of you. I'm embarrassed to say what they think I'm worth. Half a million? That's maybe on the low side.

FARIVAR
He thinks we want a ransom.

PARVIZ
We spit on your money!

JAMES
You do? You mean you're... terrorists?

PARVIZ & FARIVAR
Do we look like terrorists?

JAMES looks incredulously at the two bearded fundamentalists.

JAMES
I'm on your side! I refused to fight in Vietnam. Killing people is wrong. No matter how right it seems at the time.

PARVIZ
(insulted)
Now we're murderers!

JAMES
Yes! No! Let's talk this thing through. Tell me what you want.

FARIVAR
To save your soul. *(to PARVIZ)* Parviz...

PARVIZ exits.

FARIVAR
First, I must thank you. Without Americans like you Iran would have no Revolution. You're worth a thousand sermons.

JAMES
You've got me confused with someone else.

FARIVAR
I know exactly who you are.

JAMES
I'm a salesman. I'm here to share American know-how, raise the standard of living, spread the wealth.

FARIVAR
You pretend to be the friend of the Third World. You promise us progress. We always say Americans are naive but really you're very clever. You want our oil. You want strategic military bases. You want a government that'll do what you say.

JAMES
You're oversimplifying.

FARIVAR
You sell us things we don't need and loan us money we can't repay, until we're forced to sign over our sovereignty. That's your foreign aid.

JAMES
Sometimes it backfires.

FARIVAR
You trap us in debt, so you can enslave us. If that fails, you overthrow our leaders. If that doesn't work, you assassinate them. If we still resist, you send your armies to destroy us, and call that liberation.

JAMES
You're confusing the government and the private sector.

FARIVAR
When the Ayatollah Khomeini returns I guarantee you the Great Satan will not be building our pipelines.

PARVIZ enters with two bottles of Rolling Rock beer..

FARIVAR

Have a Rolling Rock.

Looking at FARIVAR offering him a beer JAMES finally recognizes his old friend

JAMES

Farivar?

FARIVAR

C'est moi.

The two old friends click bottles, but FARIVAR pointedly does not drink, and carefully sets his bottle down.

JAMES

Give a guy a heart attack! I thought you were gonna –

JAMES mimes slitting his own throat.

JAMES

Far out, Farivar! I've never been so glad to see anyone in my life! Love the get-up. Wait 'till I tell Charlie. He loves practical jokes!

FARIVAR

Jimmy, this is no joke. You need to leave Iran.

JAMES

You sound like Molly.

FARIVAR

How is Molly?

JAMES

(covering his feelings)

She's... fine. What happened to you?

FARIVAR

(speaking matter-of fact, but solemnly)

My sister Taraneh signed a petition distributed by Communists. My father couldn't protect her. SAVAK arrested her. She was tortured and raped. We found her body in the street outside our gate.

JAMES

God.... What did you do?

FARIVAR

Went after the guys who did it. They tied me to an iron bed, beat the soles of my feet with electric cable, threw me in jail. I started reading the Quran. I met a mullah. I realized what I'd been chasing all my life was right here. I wish I could give you the peace I feel.

JAMES
I'm happy for you.

FARIVAR
You must leave Iran.

JAMES
I've got a job to do.

FARIVAR
For the sake of our friendship, I'm warning you. SAVAK is the Shah, the Shah is America. Iran will soon become an Islamic state. We will rule by Sharia Law.

JAMES
Run a country by 7th-century tribal -

FARIVAR
Americans are no longer welcome.

JAMES starts to get an idea.

JAMES
Will you have a position of authority in this new government...?

FARIVAR
I look forward to serving Allah as the Minister of Transportation.

JAMES
We're in business! GainCorp is poised to build a network of superhighways. Facilitate the pilgrimage to Mecca! Ease the mullahs' commute from country classroom to big-city mosque!

FARIVAR is disgusted by JAMES' relentless selling.

FARIVAR
Don't you ever stop?

JAMES
Just because you're religious fanatics doesn't mean you have to live in the Dark Ages. Let Western technology help spread Eastern enlightenment. We could be a team!

FARIVAR
Development, modernization, Westernization – these are the Dark Ages! Ghengis Khan with credit cards! The light of Islam is spreading. Soon the pollution of the unbelievers will be cleansed with fire!

JAMES, misunderstanding FARIVAR's reluctance, pulls out his wallet to offer a bribe.

JAMES
I'd like to "donate to your cause..."

FARIVAR in coldly outraged, finally seeing his friend for what he's become.

FARIVAR

Parviz!

PARVIZ enters. FARIVAR motions to take JAMES away.

JAMES

Financial relationships are the glue that holds the world together!

FARIVAR

(to JAMES) You should find a new line of work.

PARVIZ starts leading JAMES off as FARIVAR exits in the other direction.

JAMES

When we got here you were eating dirt!

FARIVAR

Allah be with you –

JAMES

Talk to me, man! Don't go!

FARIVAR

I talked to you, Jimmy. Did you listen?

FARIVAR exits. PARVIZ leads JAMES off.

~Sign~

SONG

Song: "ONE DAY, AMERICA"

PARVIZ enters, glaring at the audience.

PARVIZ
(to audience)

YOU'RE NOT THE HOPE OF THE WORLD,

OR LIBERTY'S BEACON!

YOU'RE DRUNK ON YOUR POWER

BUT SOON YOU WILL WEAKEN!

BLINDED BY ARROGANCE,

DEAF TO OUR PLEAS,

ONE DAY AMERICA

YOU'LL BE DOWN ON YOUR KNEES!

YOU'RE THE LAND OF THE DOLLAR,
NOT MILK AND HONEY.
YOUR BLOOD IS NOT RED,
IT'S GREEN LIKE YOUR MONEY.
YOU CARE FOR NOTHING BUT WHAT YOU CAN
TAKE,
YOU'RE NOT AN EAGLE –
YOU'RE A POISONOUS SNAKE!

I PRAY THAT I?LL KNOW YOU NO MORE AMERICA!
THAT YEARS MAY GO BY
WITHOUT HEARING YOUR NAME.
I WANT TO SEE YOUR FLAG BURNING, NOT WAVING
I WANT TO TEACH YOU THAT WAR'S NOT A GAME!

SO COME, SEND YOUR ARMIES OVER TO ME
PROVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING FROM THE
VIETNAMESE!

LIKE THEM WE'RE READY TO MAKE YOU BLEED,
AND SEND YOU BACK ACROSS THE SEA!

ONE DAY AMERICA THE EARTH WILL RUMBLE!
ONE DAY AMERICA YOUR TOWERS WILL CRUMBLE!
ONE DAY AMERICA FROM THE HEIGHTS
YOU WILL TUMBLE

AND ONE DAY AMERICA -

YOU WILL BE HUMBLE!

PARVIZ exits.

~Sign~

YEARS PASS

ACT THREE

SCENE 5

A FANCY RESTAURANT, WASHINGTON D.C., 2006

~Sign~

U.S.A. FOR YEARS AFTER VIETNAM, FOUGHT WARS BY PROXY.

TODAY, GLOVES ARE OFF.

~Sign~

UNPAYABLE THIRD WORLD DEBT 2005 $500 BILLION

MOLLY enters, wearing fashionable, loose-fitting silk suit, heels, and vibrant ethnic scarf. She is on a cellphone. As she talks she keeps an eye on he door.

MOLLY
(on cell phone)
Right, 10,000 demonstrators-- from 122 different countries!... Absolutely, a great day, a turning point. The debtor nations have spoken with one voice...the IMF and the World Bank must be feeling the earth move under their feet.

MOLLY's phone beeps

MOLLY
Oops, my other line... anytime, Jim. (hangs up, speaks to new caller) This is Molly... Absolutely. Our organization, Debt-Free, exists to carry one message from the Third World to the First No country can be an island...as long as the majority of humanity lives in misery, no one is secure.

MOLLY's phone beeps again

MOLLY
Oops! Another call.... No, thank you. (hangs up, speaks to new caller) This is Molly -

RAY enters with bottle of wine. MOLLY sees him.

MOLLY
Eleanor, let me call you back...will do. (hangs up, turns to RAY) Thanks for coming.

RAY
Been awhile. You look great.

MOLLY's phone rings again, she silences it FRANCOIS, the headwaiter enters.

FRANCOIS

Monsieur Ray!

RAY

Francois, ca va?

FRANCOIS

Back from Sonoma so soon?

RAY

You've met my niece Molly? The woman who brought half the Third World to the World Bank door step.

FRANCOIS

Fantastique! Formidable!

RAY

Could you uncork this for us?

FRANCOIS

But of course.

FRANCOIS takes bottle, exits.

RAY

My latest – an organic chardonnay. I've discovered an affinity for sustainable agriculture. And you...have made an old man proud. I couldn't believe it when you called.

MOLLY's cell phone rings again.

RAY

Want to get that?

MOLLY

No need. So...Ambassador to Bolivia!

RAY

They're dusting me off.

MOLLY

No, they're not. You never quit government.

RAY

It's habit-forming.

MOLLY

You're gonna make those Indians see who really has the right to their resources.

RAY

I'm gonna make sure you can eat four food groups year round, keep your house warm in winter and cool in the summer.

MOLLY
You work for oil companies, you don't work for me.

RAY
Tell me that when you live like those folks in Bolivia. I don't see you wrapping your feet in old rags. I don't see you cooking on a goat-turd fire.

MOLLY
I'm solarizing my house.

FRANCOIS enters with tray and two glasses of wine. RAY and MOLLY each take a glass.

FRANCOIS
Voila.

FRANCOIS exits with tray. RAY and MOLLY sniff the wine.

RAY
Mmm. Notes of almond butter and a hint of hemp.

MOLLY
Did James know?

RAY
What-- that the world isn't fair?

MOLLY
Did he know you were---what were you? CIA? National Security Agency? Office of Navel Intelligence?

RAY
Depends on the year. He never asked. After you left, he stopped asking questions. I'm sorry I couldn't come to the funeral.

MOLLY
That's okay, all three ex-wives were there. I thought GainCorp. only hired the best. How'd you let him get kidnapped?

RAY
They took the same road twice. James liked pushing the odds.

MOLLY
(sadly)
That video was so grainy... At first I wasn't sure it was him. But then...it was his voice... He seemed to have run out of words.

FRANCOIS enters.

FRANCOIS
Monsieur Ray your table is ready.

RAY

Molly?

MOLLY

I'm not eating. Maybe in La Paz. Debt-Free's about to open an office there. See you in Bolivia, Uncle Ray.

RAY and MOLLY freeze as FRANCOIS, LUCIA, PUPPET MASTER, HAJ enter.

Song: "A NATION TURNS CRUEL"

PUPPETEER, HAJ, LUCIA, FRANCOIS

WHAT HISTORY TEACHES IS OFTEN HARD TO SEE,

YOU WON'T FIND THE FOREST IF YOU CUT DOWN

THE TREES.

ALL

THE BOTTOM'S THE BOTTOM, THE TOP IS THE TOP,

HOW LONG WILL THE BOTTOM AGREE TO HAVE

NOT?

HAJ, PUPPETEER

DISTANT PROBLEMS, SHORT TERM GAIN

LUCIA, FRANCOIS

WILLFUL BLINDNESS LONG TERM PAIN

ALL

THE BOTTOM'S THE BOTTOM THE TOP IS THE TOP

WHAT WILL IT WILL BE

WHEN THE BOTTOM SAYS STOP?

THE BOTTOM SAYS STOP!

ALL

A NATION TURNS CRUEL

WHEN IT'S PROFITS ARE RESTRICTED.

WE WHO LIVE IN COMFORT DO NOT CARE -

A NATION TURNS CRUEL

WHEN IT'S PROFITS ARE RESTRICTED.

WE WHO LIVE IN COMFORT DO NOT CARE

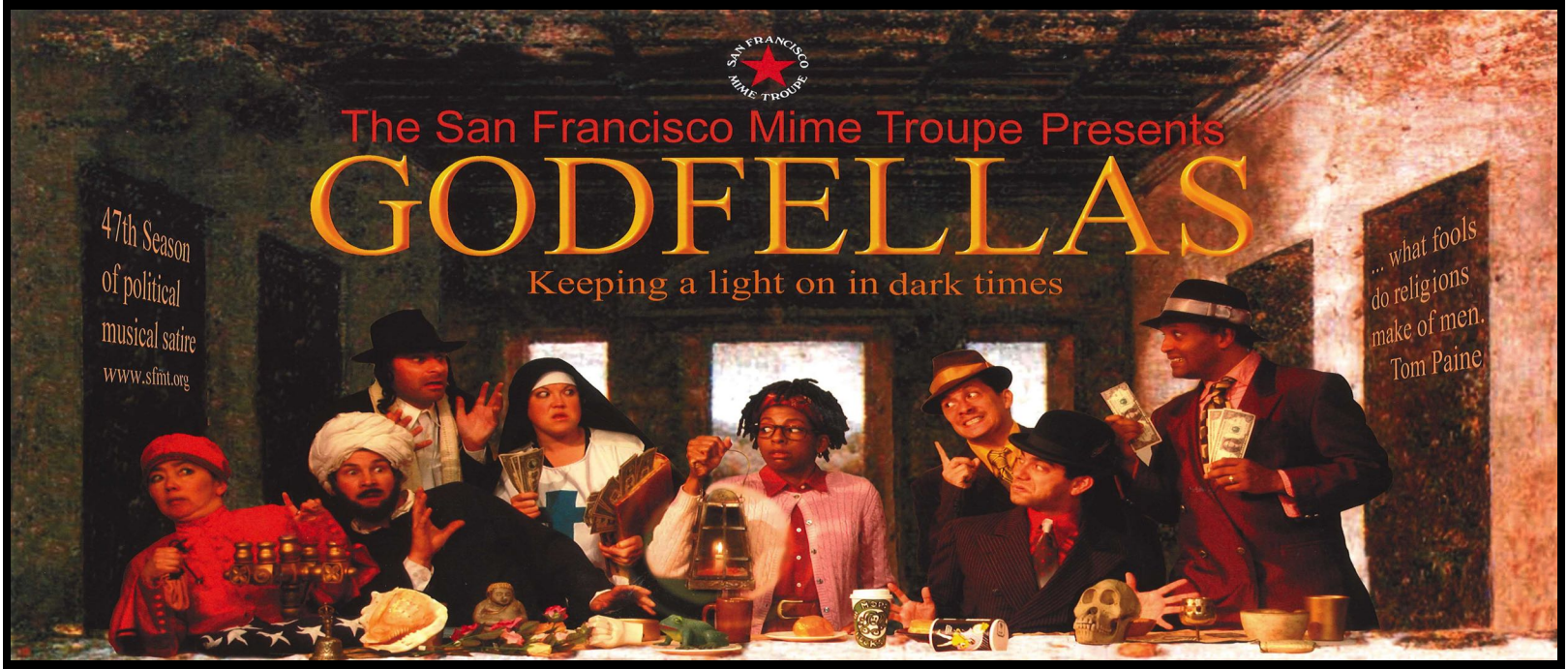
TO BE AFFLICTED!

End of Play

GodFellas

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan
with
Jon Brooks, Christian Cagigal, and Eugenie Chan

Music and Lyrics by Bruce Barthol
Addition Lyrics by Velina Brown



Poster design by Scot Siedman Photo by Matisse Michalski

The rise of theocracy throughout the world from the late 1980's through the early 21st century meant that many people wanted to party like it was 999 - only with the internet. After the western democracies had funded fundamentalists to undermine communist governments we were shocked - Shocked! - at the lack of gratitude they showed toward us.

And that growth in fundamentalism, and the rejection of the Enlightenment was not restricted to (insert religion symbol here) waving God - fearing fanatics abroad. For every person shouting a god was on their side somewhere over there we had one in America shouting just as loud. From every television, radio, and holy YouTube channel some big haired millionaire was always therewith the good news that god loves you so much he will inflict everlasting torment upon you if you don't love him back.

But religion in America isn't only about frightening children, pastel suits, and condemning the different or less fortunate - it's also about the accumulation of wealth. And in this scramble to inspire fear and get money from the fearful American fundamentalism has become less of a blessing and more like a mobsters' protection racket: "Dats a nice soul youse have dere… sointenly worth a few bucks a month. I mean… it would be terrible if somethin' was to… happen to it…"

And when a 9th century ideology acts like 20th century gangsters with 21st century rock-and-roll roadshows, what happens to the Age of Reason?

"Nothing is sacred in the Mime Troupe's GodFellas. Brazenly funny, GodFellas goes on a ruthlessly topical tear that seldom slackens."
LOS ANGELES TIMES

"One of the company's sharpest, funniest, most fundamentally patriotic, original musical comedies."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"From the very first scene, it's clear this 90-minute comedy is going to have teeth...the effort to separate church and state has rarely been this much fun."
OAKLAND TRIBUNE

An inspired and genuinely stirring piece of political theatre, not to mention an invigorating dose of common sense."
SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN

"...a side-splitting look at the narrowing separation between church and state, the troupe returns to all the things it does best - singing, clowning, and raising hell - as it lambastes demagogues who claim to know the will of heaven."
THE EAST BAY EXPRESS

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

The Reverend C.B. DeLove
O'Toole
Goldbergawitz
Sister Jesusmaryjoseph
Todd
Angela
Sara
Jenkins
Henry
Marge
Carlos
Sharputi
Crazy Annette
Mr. White
Larry King
Beaver Creek
New Orleans
Arcata
Thomas Paine
Thomas Jefferson
Constantine/Connie/MC Constantine
Tino
Rapper #2
Choir

GODFELLAS opened July 4th, 2006 in Dolores park, San Francisco, California. The production was directed by Ed Holmes, with the following cast:

De Love, Henry…….Michael Gene Sullivan*
O'Toole, Sara, Constantine/Connie/MC Constantine,
Beaver Creek, Arcata…….….Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Goldbergawitz, Todd, Sharputi……..…Christian Cagigal
Sister Jesusmaryjoseph, Carlos, New Orleans,
Thomas Jefferson, Tino……Victor Toman*
Angela, Rapper #2……Velina Brown*
Jenkins, Marge, Crazy Annette, Mr White,
Larry King, Thomas Paine……Keiko Shimosato Carreiro*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

A STAGE AT AN OUTDOOR ROCK CONCERT

The stage at the "9/11 Prayer Day" campaign event. Appropriate banners/signs are hanging. Drum intro into obnoxious guitar lick.

ANNOUNCER

Welcome ladies and gentlemen! Welcome brothers and sistersÉ to the kickoff of the Rock The Lord Crusade to reclaim California for God and honor 9/11. Let's give an awesome Sacramento welcome to Emperor Constantine, and the Ministry of Rock!

A traditional robed church CHOIR enters.

CHOIR

(sings)

VOTE FOR THE LORD AND HONOR 911,

VOTE FOR THE LORD AND HONOR 911,

AMEN!

As the CHOIR sings CONSTANTINE, the armor and leather wearing lead singer, of the very heavy metal band Ministry of Rock, breaks through and takes center stage..

Song: ROCKIN' FOR THE LORD

CONSTANTINE

HAVE YOU HEARD THE GOOD NEWS

SWEEPING THROUGH THE NATION?

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE PLAN

FOR NATIONAL SALVATION?

WE'RE GONNA RAISE OUR VOICES

ALL THE WAY TO HEAVEN,

WE'RE GONNA HAVE A PRAYER DAY TO HONOR 9/11!

WE'RE GONNA HAVE A PRAYER DAY TO HONOR 9/11!

AND WE'RE ROCKIN', ROCKIN', ROCKIN'--

ROCKIN' FOR THE LORD!

Loud, obnoxious guitar lick

THEN HE WILL RESTORE

THE HEAVENLY SHIELD, YEAH,

THAT KEPT AMERICA SAFE

AND MADE OUR ENEMIES YIELD, YEAH,

LIsa Hori-Garcia as CONSTANTINE Photo by Mike Melnyk

WE CAN GET RIGHT WITH THE LORD

AND EARN HIS ABSOLUTION --

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS AMEND THE CONSTITUTION!

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS AMEND THE CONSTITUTION!

Obnoxious guitar lick

AND WE'RE ROCKIN', ROCKIN', ROCKIN' --

ROCKIN' FOR THE LORD!

WE'LL BE ROCKIN', ROCKIN', ROCKIN'--

ROCKIN' FOR THE LORD

Obnoxious guitar lick. Music continues.

CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Here he is. Folks: The Man with the plan to Vote For The Lord. Here he is! The Reverend C.B. De love!

Obnoxious guitar lick, as CONSTANTINE and the CHIOR exit.. The REVEREND CB DE LOVE enters, wearing a choir vibrant choir robe. DE LOVE has a large bouffant hairstyle, and the elegant passion of an evangelical preacher.

DE LOVE
Brothers and Sisters, I have a question. It is the same question I'm sure all of you have: why has God forsaken America? This country used to be blessed! There was a shield of His love over all of us, protecting us from evil! We were safe. But how did we thank God for his protection? With crack smoking lesbian illegal alien abortion doctors, who teach evolution to our children! Is it any wonder we are open to attack? But what can we do? How can we protect ourselves? How can we get God's Godly God Shield back again? Our only hope is prayer!!

Music changes.

DE LOVE (CONT'D)
And that is why we are having these Rock the Lord Concerts all over California - to kick off the campaign for the National Day of Mandatory Prayer! It's a simple idea: a Constitutional Amendment that requires all citizens to join together in prayer one day, each year, to ask God to protect America again. And in honor of our fallen heroes, that prayer day will be September 11th. Who could be so heathen, so Un-American to be against putting that in the Constitution? Would you like to hear the prayer? Everybody, put your hands in the air: Oh Heavenly Father, in who's Eyes we are but filthy rags, deliver us from sin, from temptation, and from the plane crashing terrorists who want to destroy America! (Gibberish) Amen. And today we are fortunate to be joined by two of God's favorites: who will add their blessings to our holy Crusade. First Bishop Flannery O'Toole.

Michael Gene Sullivan as DE LOVE Photo by Mike Melnyk

O'TOOLE enters. He is the breathing stereotype of an Irish Catholic Priest.

O'TOOLE
(to audience, with Irish accent)
Bow your heads. "Almighty God, we rejoice in your eternal love, eternal mercy, and eternal damnation of all sinners. May they suffer a thousand lifetimes of soul-rending torture, in Christ's name, Amen."

DE LOVE
Thank you, Bishop. Now a word from our Jewish brother, Rabbi Hymie Goldbergawitz.

GOLDBERGAWITZ enters. He is the breathing stereotype of an American rabbi.

GOLDBERGAWITZ
(to audience, with Yiddish accent)
Everybody, just sit there. "Thank you, God, for not killing me today." Mazel Tov!

DE LOVE
That's right, friends, Mazel Tov to all y'all! And I'm sorry our Muslim brother, Mullah Bala Ya Khumak could not join us today, as he was detained at the airport - again. But where ever he is I'm sure he wants the same thing we all want: the restoration of God's Godly Shield... and for some more music by the Ministry of Rock! Let's hear it!

Loud obnoxious guitar lick as band begins it's next obnoxious song, as the scene shifts as if 180 degrees..

We are now backstage. We see the backs of the three religious leaders as they wave to the audience. They then turn, and DE LOVE, O'TOOLE, AND GOLDBERGAWITZ suddenly change tone and character, each becoming the breathing stereotype of an American "Guys and Dolls" gangster. They will be in this mode when ever they feel safe to reveal their true selves.

O'TOOLE
Dat wuz great! Fellas, I ain't seen a crowd like dat since da Pope croaked!

DE LOVE
I'm tellin' ya, boys, Prayer Day is in da bag!

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Did ya see 'em? Arms in da air, heads bowed down...We shoulda asked 'em ta do da Hokey Pokey, and turn demselves about -

ALL THREE
(singing)
"Cuz dats what it's all about!"

GOLDBERGAWITZ
De Love, on behalf of da Ecumenical Syndicate, leave me say yous are doing such a wonderful job!

DE LOVE
Thanks, boys!

GOLDBERGAWITZ
You get a few million more signatures on some petitions, get some public pressure on da Legislature, and when it comes time for da States to vote to amend da Constitution -

DE LOVE
California will be wrapped up wid a bow!

O'TOOLE
And we will have God from sea to shining sea!

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Just like dat song!

DE LOVE
And we will finally be ridda dis separation of Church and State!

Lisa Hori-Garcia as O'TOOLE, Michael Gene Sullivan as DE LOVE,
Christian Cagigal as GOLDBERGAWITZ Photo by Mike Melnyk

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Hey, hey, hey! What is da rule?

DE LOVE
Never say...

O'TOOLE
Never say...

DE LOVE
Separation of Church and... dat uddah thing.

O'TOOLE
And to help yous wid yer mission in dis hot bed of Secular Humanists -

GOLDBERGAWITZ
As dis state has a veritable plethora -

O'TOOLE
I am lending yous my most reliable muscle.

O'TOOLE rings bell. SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH, clearly a gruff thug, enters.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
Sister Jesusmaryjoseph. Sister, from now on da Reverend is your Boss.

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH speaks with the deep, gravelly voice of a film noir hitman.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Hey, Boss.

DE LOVE hands SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH his empty whisky glass.

DE LOVE
Freshen this up. *(to the room)* Hey, who says Catholics, Protestants, and Jews cannot work together?

STAGE MANAGER
Reverend De love!

DE LOVE, O'TOOLE, GOLDBERGAWITZ, AND SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH quickly shift into religious mode, intensely praying.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)
You're back on in five!

DE LOVE
(as preacher)
Just a moment, praise Jesus!

STAGE MANAGER exits, and the religios resume their true gangster personas.

GOLDBERGAWITZ

De Love! Dere is some property in San Francisco we have arranged for your ministry to take over. And if yous do good wid dis Prayer Shield thing who knows? All dis could become your permanent territory, and so forth, and whatnot.

DE LOVE

I will not let da syndicate down.

GOLDBERGAWITZ, O'TOOLE

Don't!

GOLDBERGAWITZ

We will be checking in with you. Shalom.

GOLDBERGAWITZ and O'TOOLE exit.

DE LOVE

Do not worry! (as Preacher) Dis is gonna be great! How do I look?

jESUSMARYJOSEPH

Good enough to walk on water!

DE LOVE

Do not blaspheme sister!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH freezes for a moment, unsure. After a pause DE LOVE starts to laugh.

DE LOVE

Gotcha!

Both laugh,, and SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH exits. DE LOVE alone on stage, snare drum starts New Orleans March Beat, his inner happiness cannot be contained, he begins to chicken strut like a post touchdown solo dance. Professor Longhair piano joins,

Song: "EASY STREET"

DE LOVE(CONT'D)

WELL, I'M FROM THE BIG EASY,

BUT I'M MOVING UP TO EASY STREET.

AND FOR EVERYTHING I GOT,

I GIVE THANKS TO JC!

BUT I'M NOT WORKIN' FOR JESUS,

I GOT JESUS WORKIN' FOR ME!

WITHOUT JESUS CHRIST
I WOULDN'T BE WHERE I AM TODAY..
SO I'M THANKFUL FOR ABORTIONS,
CHARLES DARWIN, AND THE GAYS.
WITHOUT THEM HOW WOULD THIS POOR, HOMOPHOBIC,
BLACK PREACHER GET PAID?

GOD'S OWN PARTY
SURE HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME.
HELPIN' ME EXPAND
FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA.
GETTING PAID TO PREACH,
PAID TO BE HOLY,
PAID THAT GOVERNMENT MONEY,
THANKS TO THE GOP.!

I'M FROM THE BIG EASY,
BUT I'M MOVIN' UP TO EASY STREET.
AND FOR EVERYTHING I GOT,
I WANNA THANK JC!
I'M NOT WORKIN' FOR JESUS,
I GOT JESUS WORKIN' FOR ME!

TOTE THAT CROSS, BOY!
I'M NOT WORKIN' FOR JESUS,
I GOT JESUS WORKIN' FOR ME!

He exits.

SCENE 2

THE CENTER FOR EXTENDED STUDIES.

TODD BLENDAKIN, nebishy and nerdy, mid-thirties, enters carrying a stack of pizza boxes. He puts them down, exits. After a moment ANGELA FRANKLIN, also nebishy and nerdy, mid-thirties, enters with plates and utensils, leaves them and exits. Both re-enter - he with a large box, she with cups and drinks.. Both are shy, and clearly have feelings for each other. They put banner up that says "HAPPY THIRD ANNIVERSARY!"

TODD

Chips?

ANGELA

Right here! Lemonade?

TODD

Check! The students are going to love this!

ANGELA

Three years! Gee, when we started this place I didn't think we'd last three months!

TODD

Not we, Ms. Franklin, you. It was your idea to open an after school program - the Center for Extended Studies.

ANGELA

After the District closed Jackson High, I was out of a job. So I decided to make a place where kids can study all the subjects that are getting cut from the curriculum.

TODD

And who'd have thought an ex-public school civics teacher and an ex-catholic school art teacher could work so well together? It's a miracle!

ANGELA

(playfully admonishing)

Mr. Blendakin, we both agreed -

BOTH

No dogma in the Center!

ANGELA

It took my life's saving's, but if this place can help these kids become fully rounded citizens, help them stand up for what they believe in, Gosh Darn it, that's enough for me!

TODD

Ms. Franklin... Before the students arrive, and while we're... alone... to celebrate our years together I thought I should, well, I wanted to... here!

TODD hands her a large, wrapped present.

TODD
It's something I thought you might like! Read the card.

ANGELA
(reads)
"This is something I thought you might like."

TODD
Open it!

ANGELA
Wait...
ANGELA hands TODD a large present.

ANGELA
I hope you like it.

TODD
(reads card)
"I hope you like it." You first!

ANGELA
Same time? Oh, this is so exciting!

Both unwrap gifts. Huge books.

BOTH
A book!

ANGELA
"The Complete Works of Thomas Paine!" Common Sense, The Right's of Man, The Crisis Papers!-... "These are the times that try men's souls." 1809? An antique? Oh, Mr. Blendakin, I couldn't -

TODD
Please! It's the perfect gift for a teacher so ...passionate ...about civics -

ANGELA and TODD clearly have pent-up, passion for each other, but are too shy and nerdy to be able to just admit it. Instead it bubbles up when they talk to each other about other things...

ANGELA
Thank you! Now I can snuggle up with the words of truth and justice every night... In my bed... In my nightgown... These ideas freed the world from centuries of dogma, Mr. Blendakin. It released a deep, pent up yearning for Democracy -

TODD
You mean these ideas that... grasped us?

ANGELA
In the hot hands of Freedom...

ANGELA and TODD are drawing close.

TODD
Holding us tightly - breathing their steamy breath -

ANGELA
On the heaving bosom of -

SARA, a teaching intern, enters.

SARA
Hey, guys!

ANGELA and TODD leap apart.

ANGELA
Sara!

SARA
Listen, Ms. F., I'm getting your notes ready for the next class...

Velina Brown as ANGELA, Christian Cagigal as TODD Photo by Mike Melnyk

ANGELA
No class today, Sara!

TODD
Party, remember?

SARA
Yeah, I just want to be ready for tomorrow. What do you want to lecture on?

ANGELA
Okay, eager beaver, The Constitution!

SARA
I'm on it!

SARA exits.

ANGELA
She's going to be a wonderful teacher someday. You... haven't looked at your book-

TODD
"Sister Wendy's Guide to Great... Nude Renaissance Paintings." The leather bound edition Oh, my! There's nothing like having a nun explore the human body for you.

ANGELA
Its full of great artistic ideas....

TODD
Ideas that... grasp us?

Once again their euphemistic passion starts to rise as they begin to draw close.

ANGELA
In the hot hands of creation...

TODD
Holding us tightly - breathing their steamy breath -

ANGELA
On the heaving bosom of artistic expression!

SARA enters.

SaRA
Where do you want to start? The Convention?

ANGELA and TODD leap apart again.

TODD
Uhhh... I should finish preparing for the party... Ms. Franklin...

TODD exits.

SARA
Madison? The Bill of Rights?

ANGELA
(trying to regain her composure)
Where ever you think is best, Sara. You're my teaching intern. I trust you.

SARA
What's that?

ANGELA
A gift from Mr. Blendakin. Thomas Paine.

SARA looks in the book

SARA
(reads)
"Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death." That's it! You'll start with Common Sense! That's the real spark for the Revolution, the Constitution, everything!

ANGELA
Good thinking! Paine was always my hero.

SARA
I'll copy up some quotes for you: "He whose heart is firm..."

SARA leaves.

ANGELA
"He, or she, whose heart is firm..."

TODD enters with bowl.

ANGELA
Mr. Blendakin...

TODD
Ms. Franklin?

ANGELA
It's been three years. Couldn't you call me... Angela?

TODD
Why...yes, I suppose I... And please call me Todd.

ANGELA
Todd...

TODD

Angela...

ANGELA

I was thinking, Todd, since it's our anniversary, we should do something special. Something wild!

TODD

I brought the spicy onion dip.

ANGELA

No, something daring.

TODD

It has garlic!

ANGELA

Have you ever walked across the Bridge?

TODD

The bridge? No! 1.4 Miles across! I haven't walked that far since high school gym class.

ANGELA

It would be my first time, too! Wouldn't it be exciting, having our first times be... Together?

TODD

It's 220 feet above the water! And it's cold out there!

ANGELA

So, you can't go?

TODD

Unless I was... grasped...

ANGELA

In the hot hands of courage?

TODD

I'll wear my adventure cardigan.

MRS. JENKINS, a middle-aged businesswoman enters, followed by Sister JESUSMARYJOSEPH.

JENKINS

Excuse me -

ANGELA

Mrs. Jenkins! What are you doing here?

JENKINS

Well, I was just -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
(harshly, to JENKINS)
Hey! Zip it! (looks around) Sweet set-up yous got here!

TODD
Mrs. Jenkins, who is this lady?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Lady! I like that!

JENKINS
This is Sister Jesusmaryjoseph.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Hey, Howzit goin'.

JENKINS
She and I are here to inform you that as of tomorrow the Center for Extended Studies will be taken over by another organization.

ANGELA AND TODD
What organization?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
You said dat together! Like a choir!

JENKINS
The Board has come to an agreement with the Jesus Christ Loves You Ministries.

TODD AND ANGELA
The J.C.L.U.!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Yous did it again! Dat's amazing!

TODD
But ma'am...

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
First lady, now ma'am. I think someone is flirting...

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH looks hungrily at TOOD

TODD
Ma'am, Lady, Sir..., Sister! You can't just take over!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Sorry, dollface, but you have already been tooken.

JENKINS hands letter to TODD.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Apparently da Office of Faith and Community based services have decided your students would be better served wid a more sanctified curriculum: Da four R's -

readin', ritin', rithmatic, and religion. So tomorrow dis place becomes da J.C.L.U. Academy for Christian Citizenship and Abstinence Sciences, and so forth. And as for yours two... tell 'em.

JENKINS
As you know religious organizations are exempt from discrimination laws-

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Which means we are not required to employ atheists, heathens, or nobody else we think God is damning! So I suggest yous get da Hell out of our building before evening prayers.

ANGELA
But... But you get federal money!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Yous got a problem, take it up wid Congress! (to Jenkins) You, door!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH snaps her finger, Jenkins exits.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Oh, and God bless you both. (to TODD) But especially you, naughty boy.

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH exits.

ANGELA
What... can I... where..I put everything I had into this place...

TODD
Angela...

ANGELA
My savings went into the books, the supplies... my apartment upstairs... oh my goodness! Where am I going to live?

TODD
Maybe we can start another Center -

ANGELA
With what? This Center is all I have!

TODD
There's other funding!

ANGELA
From where? She's right - all the money is going to the four R's!

TODD
We can't give up! "These are the times that try men's souls," remember?

ANGELA
No one wants what we teach! Nobody is interested in art and politics anymore! We're expendable! What's the point in going on?

TODD

Wait! I know! There is a way we can keep teaching here!

ANGELA

How? Those people are fanatics! They're going to change everything! The only way I could stay is if I joined the church.

TODD

You'd never have to worry about funding again! All you'd have to do is let the light of the Lord into your heart.

ANGELA

You... you want to work for those hoodlums?

TODD

I want to teach, Angela! That's all I know how to do! I got laid off after twelve years teaching in catholic school. Twelve years, teaching great art screaming teenagers - and I loved every minute of it! Then there was this Center, but now that's over. And if I have to join the J.C.L.U. to keep teaching, I will.

ANGELA

This isn't about teaching! It's about the separation of Church and State! Being forced to pray so I can teach!

TODD

We could be together!

ANGELA

I would rather... I'd rather die than be part of same insane, intolerant, theocracy!

TODD

Not all Christians are intolerant!

ANGELA

Just insane!

TODD

That's not what I meant! We're not all like that!

ANGELA

And you...you're one of them!

TODD

No, Angela!

ANGELA

Your religion, your God has taken everything from me!

TODD

Angela!

ANGELA
Ms. Franklin!

ANGELA breaks down, leaves.

TODD
Ms.... Angela! I'll... I'll pray for you.

SARA enters.

SARA
I finished getting the quotes ready. Is the party starting? Where's Ms. Franklin?

TODD
Sara, help me put this away. I have to tell you something...

They exit.

Victor Toman as SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH, Christian Cagigal as TODD,
Velina Brown as ANGELA, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as JENKINS
Photo by Mike Melnyk

SCENE 3

A FAMOUS BRIDGE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

CARLOS, a bridge security guard walks by. Two tourists, HENRY and MARGE enter, looking at the view.

HENRY
And would ya look at that? Don't get a view like that in Iowa city.

MARGE
Guess that's why Donnie always wanted to come here...

HENRY
It's beautiful.

MARGE
Well, let's get on with it.

HENRY pulls out a small box. CARLOS sees them.

CARLOS
Hey! No littering off the Bridge!

HENRY
(sadly)
It's not... not garbage.

CARLOS
Well, whatever it is, you can't just dump it off -

MARGE
It's our son, our... Donnie.

HENRY
He always wanted to see San Francisco. But he shipped out of New York, to Germany -

MARGE
Then straight to Fallujah.

CARLOS
Well, you're not supposed to...uh... well, hurry up. Take your time, but, well... I'll leave you alone.

HENRY
Well.

Brokenhearted, HENRY pours the ashes

MARGE
Bye, Donnie. You were a brave boy.

HENRY
I should have stopped him... I could have...

MARGE
Reverend says it's God's will. Don't -

HENRY
I want to be alone... with... with my... son.

HENRY leaves, hugging the box, as MARGE goes to another part of the stage. A jogger, MR. SHARPUTI, enters.

CARLOS
How far today, Mr. Sharputi?

SHARPUTI
There and back - twelve miles!

CARLOS
If I ran twelve miles my ass would fall off.

SHARPUTI
In the army back in India, we did twenty every morning. Try! It would get you fit.

SHARPUTI jogs off.

CARLOS
Yeah, if dead is fit.

CARLOS leaves. After a moment ANGELA walks onto the bridge, carrying her large book.. She looks shaken, disheartened, and drained. She looks over the railing of the bridge.

ANGELA
Wow, that water looks cold. And it's a long way down... A long, long, long, long way. But there's nothing for me up here. They've taken it all - my job, my center, my country, even my... oh, Todd! How I wanted to grasp you in the hot hands of intellectual intercourse! But it's all gone now.

ANGELA looks at her book.

ANGELA
They've taken our country Mr. Paine. There's no place left for us now.

ANGELA takes a breath, steps over the railing, and prepares to jump. Sharputi enters, sees her..

SHARPUTI
Holy Shiva!

MARGE
Oh my goodness!

HENRY

Hold on there!

ALL (except ANGELA)

STOP!

ANGELA

Leave me alone!

SHARPUTI

Get yourself down from that precarious position right now, miss!

CARLOS

Wait! Just a second...

CARLOS pulls out a small book - The Jumper Handbook.

CARLOS

Woman...black...late thirties -

ANGELA

Mid-thirties!

CARLOS

(reads)

"Yo, sistah, that ain't no way to go out!" (turns page) "With your fine self!"

ANGELA

I know what I'm doing!

CARLOS

(reads)

"Listen, whoever he is, he ain't worth it -girlfriend."

ANGELA

Oh, horsefeathers!

CARLOS

(reads)

"If you jump you'll miss Oprah!"

SHARPUTI

Suicide is very bad karma, and I can assure you in your next life you will be something very unsavory!

ANGELA

How do you know?

MARGE

You'll go to Hell!

ANGELA

There is no Hell!

HENRY

God loves you!

ANGELA

There is no God!

MARGE

(shocked)

That's... blasphemy!

ANGELA

Is it? (shouting to the sky) Then let God strike me down right now!

HENRY, MARGE, CARLOS, and SHARPUTI look up, cringing in fear. But nothing happens.

ANGELA

See! There is no God! Just crooks who use religion to rob us blind, and turning America into a mindless Theocracy- like Sudan, Afghanistan... or South Dakota!

SHARPUTI

God forgive her!

ANGELA

There is no God! Watch! Hey, up there listen to this! Religion is a curse on freedom!

HENRY, MARGE, CARLOS, and SHARPUTI cringe in fear again. Nothing happens.

ANGELA

Heaven is just a bribe to make us follow orders!

HENRY, MARGE, CARLOS, and SHARPUTI really cringe in fear again. Nothing happens.

ANGELA

God is not on our side, because... THERE IS NO GOD!

HENRY, MARGE, CARLOS, and SHARPUTI really, really cringe in fear. Nothing happens, except ANGELA ruefully chuckles.

ANGELA

See? There's nothing up there!

ALL

(testing the thought)

Nothing?

ANGELA

You've all been lied to, to keep you from thinking! From asking questions! The so called Men of God are just a bunch of con men with big hair, who want to turn us into a nation of fools and slaves, then tell us it's God's will that we sacrifice our rights, our lives, even the ones we love...

HENRY looks at the empty box of ashes.

HENRY

It... wasn't God's will.....

ANGELA

It's all lies! And who's going to stand up to them? Who's going to fight for Democracy and say "if your God thinks he can take my country, he can kiss my black heiney?" Who?

ANGELA has worked herself up to a righteous passion she's never known before, and waiting for an answer she realizes she already has one.

ANGELA

Gosh darn it... I will!

ANGELA pulls herself back over the railing, onto the bridge. CARLOS, relieved, goes back to his guard station.

CARLOS

You're not going to jump?

ANGELA

Are you kidding? It's 220 feet!

Meanwhile HENRY nears the edge.

HENRY

(morosely)

That's a long, long, long, long, long way down...

MARGE

Henry?

HENRY

Why did Donnie have to die in that desert - for what? God's will? She's right, Marge --

Suddenly, decisively, HENRY climbs over railing. SHARPUTI sees this and starts trying to get CARLOS' attention.

HENRY

It's all lies!

MARGE

Henry, wait! Without you, I...I don't know what I'd do! I already lost my Donnie.

Suddenly MARGE climb over the railing joining HENRY. They hold hands. Meanwhile SHARPUTI has gotten CARLOS' attention.

CARlOS

Now what?

MARGE
(to HENRY)
So I guess I better go with you.

CARLOS
(panicked)
Why?

MARGE
We're married. We always go everywhere together!

ANGELA, thinking quickly.

ANGELA
But what about God loves you?

HENRY
(hopelessly)
God can -

HENRY and MARGE
Kiss our black heinies!

HENRY and MARGE Prepare to jump.

ANGELA
Oh, dear!

CARLOS
Wait! There may not be a God, but there may be a something!

SHARPUTI
That's right. And that something is... nothing!

Tearfully SHARPUTI climbs over the rail, joining HENRY and MARGE..

CARLOS
Mr. Sharputi?!

SHARPUTI
I'm tired of running, Carlos! You don't know what I did back home! In the army - in Kashmir... They told us we were serving God -

HENRY
There is no God!

ANGELA understands her part in disheartening everyone, tries to come up with something to give them hope.

ANGELA
Listen. All of you... this isn't right!

SHARPUTI
There is no right and wrong - only death!

CARLOS has pulled out his handbook again.

CARLOS
No, there's more! (reads) "There's... there's children playing -"

HENRY
Not our Donnie -

CARLOS
No! I mean (reads) "There's beautiful, wind swept meadows -"

SHARPUTI
Like the blood soaked valleys of Kashmir!

ANGELA
(to CARLOS)
Put that book away!

MARGE
Goodbye, Henry!

SHARPUTI
Hello, nothing!

HENRY, MARGE, and SHARPUTI prepare to jump.

Song: "ARMIES OF THE NIGHT"

ANGELA

"THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MENS SOULS!"

Confused, HENRY, MARGE, and SHARPUTI pause.

Marge, henry, sharputi
What?

ANGELA

SO THERE IS NO OLD MAN

ON A THRONE IN THE SKY,

AND THE ONLY THING WE KNOW

IS THAT WE LIVE AND THEN WE DIE.

HENRY, MARGE, and SHARPUTI slump, disheartened.

ANGELA

BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE BEHIND GOD,

OR MAKE HIM YOUR EXCUSE -

SEARCH YOUR HEART AND YOUR MIND

BEFORE YOUR HEAD GOES IN THE NOOSE!

BECAUSE PEOPLE NEED YOU,

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU,

AND I NEED YOU, TOO!

YOU CAN SEE THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT,

WHOSE SUPERSTITIONS KILL THE LIGHT,

OF REASON AND LIBERTY -

IS THAT THE WORLD YOU WANT TO SEE?

HENRY

That's not the world our Donnie would have wanted.

ANGELA

SURVIVAL IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE!

IF WE DIE OR GIVE UP, THEN THEY WIN.

'THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING,

LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN!

Heartened HENRY, MARGE, and SHARPUTI climb back over the railing.

ANGELA

THIS VERY LIFE YOU LEAD, EVEN YOU'RE RIGHT TO BE,

COMES WITH INTRINSIC RESPONSIBILITIES

YOU MUST ENGAGE, AND TO NOT IGNORE

THE THREAT TO FREEDOM STANDING AT THE DOOR!

HENRY, MARGE, SHARPUTI, and CARLOS join ANGELA, who looks into the night.

ALL

WE CAN SEE THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT,

WHO'S SUPERSTITIONS KILL THE LIGHT,

OR REASON AND OF LIBERTY -

IT'S NOT THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE?

SURVIVAL IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE!

IF WE DIE OR GIVE UP, THEY WIN.

ANGELA

I DON'T HAVE A PLAN OR A ROADMAP, BUT

ALL

LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN

CARLOS

That... that was amazing! All my years, I've never seen... who are you?

ANGELA

My name's Angela Franklin.

ALL

(like devotees)

Angela...

ANGELA

I'm just a teacher.

SHARPUTI

She's a teacher...

HENRY

A humble teacher...

MARGE

How would you like a cup of coffee?

ANGELA

I don't drink coffee. Caffeine gives me nosebleeds.

HENRY

Oh, come on. You saved us - least we can do is buy you a cup of something. Otherwise we might...

HENRY, MARGE, SHARPUTI, and CARLOS lean threateningly toward railing again.

ANGELA
Alright! Maybe a glass of lemonade!

HENRY
I think I'll get a glass of lemonade, too.

MARGE
Me, too!

CARLOS
We'll all get lemonade! Right, Angela?

All
(again, like devotees)
Angela...

ANGELA
(a little unnerved)
Okay...

SHARPUTI
I know an excellent juice and healthy beverage place in the Marina! Follow me!

They all leave, except ANGELA

ANGELA
(sings)

These are the times that try mens souls...

MARGE re-enters.

MARGE
Come on, honey! The RV's all warmed up!

Exits.

Michael Gene Sullivan as HENRY, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as MARGE,
Velina Brown as ANGELA, Victor Toman as CARLOS, Christian Cagigal as SHARPUTI
Photo by Mike Melnyk

SCENE 4

THE CORNER OF HAIGHT STREET AND ASHBURY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

TODD enters, with SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH. TODD begins setting up a table. SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH has stacks of religious pamphlets.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Okay, buddy boy. Dis is your turf, and here are your petitions.

TODD
This is ridiculous! I'm a teacher, not a missionary!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Da Boss says everybody gets signatures for da prayer day amendment, so everybody gets signatures! Got it?

TODD
But 1000?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Do not worry if you are a few names short. Make nice wid me, and maybe nobody does not need know....

TODD
(quickly)
I'd better get to work!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Right. So long, baby cakes. And remember (flirting) miracles... can... happen...

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH exits. TODD talks to audience.

TODD
Sign the Prayer Day Petition. Restore God's Godly shield. Sign here to help protect our nation from evil! Support the Day of Prayer Amendment! Help the Lord stop another 9/11...

An older woman, CRAZY ANNETTE enters. She is clearly homeless.

TODD
(speaking really fast)
Excuse me, sister but did you hear the good news about the lord Jesus dying for your sins but coming back from the dead to save your soul for which he died, and that sucked, but he's risen again to protect America from terrorists and I am here to spread the word of the Lord and his glorious truth?

CRAZY ANNETTE
Truth! You know the truth?

TODD
Do you want to know the truth?

CRAZY ANNETTE
Yes!

TODD
Thank goodness, Sister! Sign right here! I thought I was alone in this wilderness! The truth is only your prayers can save us -

CRAZY ANNETTE
Yes -

TODD
From the forces of evil -

CRAZY ANNETTE
Yes -

TODD
Because if you don't the day will come when Satan will smite this country-

CRAZY ANNETTE
With delta rays!

TODD
Delta rays?

CRAZY ANNETTE
Repent! Debase yourselves before the Throne of Glactar, or burn forever in the lava pits of Planet Despair!

SARA enters. She is selling marijuana.

SARA
Buds...trees...

TODD
(to CRAZY ANNETTE)
Hold that thought -

CRAZY ANNETTE
Oh, if only I could...

TODD
(to SARA)
Excuse me, miss, but this is a petition for... Sara Johnson!

SARA
(startled)
Mr. Blendakin! Hi! How's it going?

TODD
What are you doing here?

SARA
(ashamed)
You know...just hanging out trying to get by...

TODD
Don't tell me you gave up on teaching!

SARA
I couldn't get another teaching internship that paid.

TODD
I could still get you a scholarship at the Academy -

TODD gives SARA a pamphlet.

SARA
I don't know, Mr. B. The last thing I need is a bunch of nuns teaching me how not to have sex. How are they treating you? Why are you out here instead of teaching classes?

CARLOS enters.

CRAZY ANNETTE
Sky invaders! Delta rays of doom! Jesus is coming!

TODD
(to ANNETTE)
Stop that!

CARLOS
(to the AUDIENCE)
Citizens, today we are going to speak about the creeping theocracy that is taking over our country!

TODD
(to CARLOS)
Hey! This is my corner!

CARLOS ignores him.

CARLOS
But who is going to fight for our freedom from fundamentalist fanatics? Who is going to holler go to Hell at the holy hypocrites? And who says their God can kiss her black heinie?

TODD, CRAZY ANNETTE, SARA
Who?

CARLOS
Citizen Angela!

ANGELA enters.

TODD

Angela?

ANGELA

Todd!

BOTH

What are you doing?

CARLOS

She is just a humble teacher.

TODD

I know she's a teacher -

CARLOS

Yes, but who could have suspected the role she would have in saving America!

TODD

Saving America? Isn't that a little -

ANGELA

Shhh! Don't get in the way of his free speech.

CARLOS

(indicating ANGELA)

She's here to save the nation from religious stupification!

CRAZY ANNETTE

(indicating TOOD)

Well, we're here to save the world from delta rays of doom!

TODD

We're not really together...

ANGELA pulls out a paper, begins reading to AUDIENCE.

ANGELA

Citizens! The separation of Church and State is being torn down, and everything America stands for is being destroyed!

CARlOS

Destroyed!

ANGELA

Our democracy is doomed -

CARLOS

Doomed!

ANGELA

Unless we take drastic steps -

CARLOS

Drastic steps! Drastic!

ANGELA

And that is why we want you all to join the:

ANGELA AND CARLOS

Citizens for a God Free America!

TODD

A God free America?

ANGELA

We must liberate ourselves from the chains of dogma! As Thom Paine said; "We fight not to enslave, but to set a country free!"

TODD

You're... She's... don't listen to her! God loves you all! And he wants you to sign this petition!

ANGELA

God can kiss my black heinie!

TODD

Hush up, you! This is for the Prayer Day Amendment. It's to help restore God's Godly shield.

ANGELA

Mr. Blendakin, you can't believe that nonsense! What are you thinking?

TODD

Ms. Franklin, What I believe has nothing to do with thinking! (to crowd) We must all help God save America by signing this petition, or you can-

ANGELA

Believe in the first Amendment!

TODD

"Thou shalt have no other Gods before me!"

ANGELA

That's the first Commandment! "Government shall make no law respecting the establishment of Religion." That is the whole idea of the CGFA!

TODD

(desperately)

And this is an idea that has grasped you...

ANGELA

Yes - in the hot hands of Atheism...

Despite their argument they are still attracted to each other.

TODD
Holding us tightly, Breathing it's steamy breath...

ANGELA
On the heaving bosom of -

TOOD wrenches himself from ANGELA's gaze.

TODD
Lies! Please, people! Just sign my petition! It's the only chance to save me from... I mean save us from the wrath of God!

CRAZY ANNETTE
God can kiss my black heinie, too!

TODD
(to ANGELA) Now look what you started!

CRAZY ANNETTE
When the aliens made my husband sick, where was God? When the aliens cancelled his health insurance, where was God? And after years of pain, after the aliens took everything we had, and finally took my husband where was God? What good is he? So I say, kiss my black heinie, too!

CARLOS, CRAZY ANNETTE, SARA
KISS MY BLACK HEINIE! KISS MY BLACK HEINIE!

CARLOS
And if any of you fellow citizens are interested in saving Democracy, we have pamphlets and voter registration forms, and free lemonade back in our office -

SARA
Can I come, too?

ANGELA
Of course you can! This is perfect! We're starting a new program, and you can be the first teacher for our godless youth workshop!

TODD
But... but what about the J.C.L.U.? Your internship?

SARA
Like Tom Paine said, "One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests."

ANGELA
Thomas Paine! Good girl!

SARA
See ya, Mr. Blendakin!

SARA, CARLOS, ANGELA
KISS MY BLACK HEINIE! *(repeated while exiting)*

SARA, CARLOS, ANGELA exit. CRAZY ANNETTE hands TODD the flyer he'd given her earlier.

CRAZY ANNETTE
Here. Recycle this. KISS MY BLACK HEINIE! (repeated while exiting)

Velina Brown as ANGELA, Christian Cagigal as TODD Photo by Mike Melnyk

CRAZY ANNETTE exits. TODD is left, stunned.

TODD
Wait! Don't you see she's leading you to... Fine! If you wanna let people attack America, fine! You go, with your heinie kissing, but I'll be right here - protecting all of you from evil! (pause) What am I doing here? Is this what it takes to be a good Christian? Oh, Jesus, please give me a sign!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH enters.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
So, how's it going, big boy? Looks like you're a few short...

TODD
I just need a little more time -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Don't worry, sugar bumps, I'm sure we can works this out...

TODD
But -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Hey! None of your lip! At least *(flirting)* not here...

TODD
(panicking, to anyone)
Please sign my petition! Please!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH leads TODD away.

SCENE 5

A STAGE AT AN OUTDOOR ROCK CONCERT

Onstage at another concert: Rock the Lord II

ANNOUNCER

Welcome ladies and gentlemen! Welcome brothers and sisters to Rock the Lord in Visalia! Joining the Rock the Lord crusade, to reclaim California for God and honor 9/11, let's give them an awesome Central Valley welcome... Connie and Tino - with the Ministry of Rock!

CONNIE and TINO enter, decked out in star-spangled country western outfits.

Song: CHRISTIAN NATION

CONNIE AND TINO

I WANT TO LIVE IN A CHRISTIAN NATION,

LIVE IN A COUNTRY WHERE GOD IS THE BOSS.

LET THIS BLESSED NATION LIGHT THE WAY FOR ALL OTHERS,

ONWARD TO GLORY 'NEATH THE FLAG AND THE CROSS.

SO COME BE A SOLDIER AND FIGHT FOR DOMINION,

OVER ALL NATIONS, THE SEA, AND THE AIR.

WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD IS UNITED IN JESUS,

WE'LL SEE OLD GLORY FLY EVERYWHERE -

EVERYWHERE!

COME ON DOWN AND TAKE THE OATH,

BE A SOLDIER OF DOMINION!

COME ON DOWN AND TAKE THE OATH,

FIGHT FOR GOD AND THE USA!

COME ON DOWN AND TAKE THE OATH,

GONNA SMITE 'EM, GONNA SMOTE 'EM,

COME ON DOWN AND JOIN GOD'S ARMY,

THE ENEMY TO SLAY!

'CAUSE WHEN YOU'RE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS,

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro & Velina Brown as CHORUS, Victor Toman as TINO,
Lisa Hori-Garcia as CONNIE Photo by Mike Melnyk

YOU ARE WALKING ON THE FIGHTING SIDE OF ME!

YES WHEN YOU'RE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS,

YOU ARE WALKING ON THE FIGHTING SIDE OF ME!

COME ON SISTERS, COME ON BROTHERS,

LET'S UNITE AGAINST THE OTHER,

THEY ARE WRONG AND WE ARE RIGHT,

LOCK AND LOAD, IT'S TIME TO FIGHT!

EVERY HERETIC AND HOMO,

EVERY DOUBTER YOU SEE,

COME ON DOWN AND JOIN GOD'S ARMY,

TAKE THE OATH WITH ME!

CONNIE steps out and addresses the AUDIENCE.

CONNIE

COME ON EVERYBODY, SING ALONG WITH US! WHEN YOU'RE WALKING ON THE FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS, YOU'RE WALKING ON THE FIGHTING SIDE OF ME -

BOTH

WHEN YOU'RE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS,

YOU ARE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF ME!

WHEN YOU'RE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS,

YOU ARE WALKING ON

THE FIGHTING SIDE OF ME!

FIGHTING SIDE OF ME...

TINO

(harshly, with a German accent)

EINS, ZWEI, DREI VIER!

BOTH

FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS!

FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS!

FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS!

FIGHTING SIDE OF JESUS!

CONNIE
(to AUDIENCE)
Now, let's give a big how-down welcome to the Reverend C.B. De Love!

CONNIE and TINO leave as DE LOVE takes the stage.

DE LOVE
Brothers and Sisters... Can you feel it? Can you feel it? That fire growing in your soul? That's the Lord coming. Can you feel it? Can you feel him coming into every part of your life - your work, your school, your home? Praise the Lord, for when we pass the National Mandatory Day of Prayer, and God is in the Constitution - where he belongs - his path will be every path, and his truth, every truth. Now I know some of you think you can hide from the Lord, can keep your sins secret. But I'm telling you he's coming, and there is nothing unknown to him. He watches as you teach your children, he reads the page when you write your letters, he listens when you make your phone calls. He's coming... And when the Lord reigns over America there will be a re-birth in this land, and it will be truly blessed, and the righteous will be rewarded! And for the unfaithful... The Lord knows you... he sees you, and there will also be a reckoning in this land, the unFaithful will be... cleansed. Amen.

Again the perspective shifts 180 degrees, and we see backstage. DE LOVE is called aside by a man with a briefcase, MR. WHITE - a very straight-laced government functionary.

WHITE
Reverend De Love, the President wanted me to tell you personally how happy he is with your work here in California.

DE LOVE
(in full gangster mode)
I'm just doin' my part in dese difficult times, Mr. White House Guy. People are cold, people are hungry...And what better way to spend their hard earned tax dollars than on a giant invisible shield against evil? And widout yous guys in da Office of Faith Based Initiatives we would have to make do wid passing da plate!

WHITE
So in appreciation of your hard work the President has authorized me to grant you additional funds for your crusade!

WHITE opens his briefcase, revealing that it is packed with money.

DE LOVE
And the Lord will provide. Come ta papa!

As DE LOVE reaches for the money SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH, enters, out of breath.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Reverend! It's a disastah!

DE LOVE
What?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Dere we was, spreadin' da word on da street about da Prayer Day, and such. A good crowd, when all of a sudden dis tall broad shows up!

WHITE
Tall broad? What is she talking about?

Victor Toman as SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH, Michael Gene Sullivan as DE LOVE
Photo by Mike Melnyk

DE LOVE
Sister please. Our generous guest was just about to make with servin' up da lettuce. Can this not wait?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Den she starts flappin' her gums about how religion is a racket, da Prayer Shield is da bunk, and how dis whole ting is n unconstitutional violation to da separation of church and ...da uddah thing! She took da whole crowd!

DE LOVE
Just some bimbo on a soapbox blowin' bubbles! It is not about nuttin'!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
It ain't not nuttin, Boss! Lookit dese poll numbas!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH hands DE LOVE a newspaper.

DE LOVE
(reading, shocked)
Down nine per cent?

WHITE
(closing the briefcase)
Reverend, I'm sorry, but I think, until the poll numbers are back up, I ought to -

RABBI GOLDBERG and BISHOP O'TOOLE enter

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Put down dat bag!

DE LOVE
Rabbi, Bishop! What brings yous two to da Coast?

O'TOOLE
Word has gotten back East yous are having a little problem wid da support for God and such in your territory, and whatnot.

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Da Syndicate is not satisfied, De Love...

O'TOOLE
And when we are not satisfied -

BOTH
God is not satisfied!

WHITE
And neither is the President! So, if you'll excuse me - !

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Hey, White House Guy, we could not help but notice dat you are encumbered wid a generous wad of gelt.

DE LOVE
Hey, that's my dough.

O'TOOLE
Until such time as da Reverend has resolved his situation, da Syndicate thinks we should hold da lettuce for him...

WHITE
I think I should take it back to Washington.

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Do you not trust us? He does not trust us!

O'TOOLE
I am hurt! After all God has done for da President! But if dat is de' way the Administration wants to play it, dat's too bad...

GOLDBERGAWITZ, O'TOOLE
Too bad...

O'TOOLE
You know, it's a nice administration they got.

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Real nice...

O'TOOLE
It'd be a real shame if something was to happen to it...

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Yeah, cuz I like da President - I do! But times change... Things get broken...

O'TOOLE
Like if we wuz to get unhappy things might get broken..

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Like their congressional majority...

WHITE
You wouldn't!

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Who knows? A lack of trust, and God could smite our enthusiasms regarding bringing out da vote, and such.

WHITE
Alright! Here's the money!

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Now dat I look at it, dat bag looks kinda small...

WHITE
I'll... I'll get more! I'll go right back to Washington!

O'TOOLE
And why don't we go along, just to make sure yous don't get lost.

O'TOOLE and GOLDBERGAWITZ turn on DE LOVE.
De Love! Da Syndicate expects you to take care of dis situation you gat...

GOLDBERGAWITZ
And take care of it quick. We don't wanna hear no more low poll numbers! We like you, De Love...It would be a shame if da boys had to... make uddah arrangements...

WHITE, O'TOOLE and GOLDBERGAWITZ start to leave.

GOLDBERGAWITZ
Oh, (not gangster) and God bless you.

DE LOVE
(not gangster) God bless you, too.

WHITE, O'TOOLE and GOLDBERGAWITZ leave.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
What are we gonna do, Boss?

DE LOVE
(gangster) I'm thinking about it!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Word is da tall broad has raised enough scratch from da unfaithful to open a little storefront in da Haight Ashbury.

DE LOVE
Da center of sin.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
How 'bout me and some of da girls from da convent pay dese heathen a little visit -

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH loudly cracks her knuckles.

DE LOVE
No! Wid all dis Prayer Day jazz everybody is watching us. We must be subtle.

The word "subtle" is pronounced "sub-tle."

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Subtle... subtle... but whom should we be subtle at?

DE LOVE
Do we not know nuttin' else about said tall broad?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Just dat's she's a teacher, she's got a big mouth, and dat one of our acolytes used to know her -

DE LOVE
Really! Tell me more about said acolyte - and be subtle.

DE LOVE and SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH exit..

SCENE 6

THE TELEVISION STUDIO OF THE LARRY KING SHOW.

LARRY KING and DE LOVE are seated in a tv studio, on the air. On another part of the stage, as if at home, ANGELA watches them on a television in her office.

ANNOUNCER
And we're back with Larry King, Live!

LARRY KING
My guest is California Director of the Mandatory Day of Prayer Crusade, and author of the book "The Godli-ist Manifesto," Reverend C.B. De Love!

DE LOVE
Thank you, Larry.

The in-studio phone rings.

LARRY KING
(answering phone)
Beaver Creek, California! You're the on air!

On another part of the stag a young woman enters, as if on phone, calling from BEAVER CREEK. She is, dressed as a cheerleader, with pom-poms.

BEAVER CREEK
(cheery and enthusiastic)
Reverend De Love, I want to tell you how much all the Christian kids at Beaver Creek high appreciate your hard work. And from all the girls on the Screaming Beavers yell team - gooooo Jesus!

BEAVER CREEK exits.

LARRY KING
Amazing! Now, Reverend, tell us about the Mandatory Day of Prayer Amendment. I see it's still going down in the polls.

DE LOVE
That's the work of Satan, Larry- and the Citizens for a God Free America! Their leader Miss Angela Franklin is a silver tongued siren, an ungodly un-American, a pagan pied piper leading people to perdition!

LARRY
But Ms. Franklin does have a good record as a teacher -

DE LOVE
Miss Franklin is a terrible teacher, who imposes her godlessness on her students, taking away any chance they have for salvation!

ANGELA gets up, dials phone. Phone on tv set rings.

LARRY
San Francisco, you're on with -

ANGELA
How dare you call me a bad teacher!

LARRY
Angela Franklin from the CGFA!

ANGELA
You have a nerve saying I'm endangering souls, when you're destroying Democracy!

DE LOVE
Miss Franklin -

ANGELA
Ms. Franklin!

DE LOVE
All we want is one Nation under God, so that all Americans may enter His heavenly kingdom!!

ANGELA
You hear that? Kingdom? Even in heaven they won't let us vote! Thom Paine said, "Tyranny in religion is the worst, because it seeks to pursue us into eternity!"

DE LOVE
Miss Franklin -

ANGELA
Ms. Franklin!

DE LOVE
God is already King of Heaven and Earth!!

ANGELA
God can kiss my black heinie!

DE LOVE
You see, Larry? I just hope no children were listening! But for the rest of America - now you see the evil we are up against!

A man enters, as if on phone, calling from NEW ORLEANS. He is dressed as a commercial fisherman.

LARRY
Stay on the line Angela. Line 2! New Orleans, you're on the air!

NEW ORLEANS
Larry, I've always been a good catholic - church every Sunday - except during the play-offs. But after Katrina all we got from our God-fearing President was promises, and all we got from God was Pat Robertson blaming homosexuals! (defensively) Now - my wife is not gay, and I've been out of the navy a long time! But if the best God and his friend in the White House can do is blame folks rather than helping, I say kiss my black heinie, too. Thank you, Angela!

NEW ORLEANS exits.

ANGELA
You're welcome!

A woman enters, as if on phone, calling from ARCATA, CA. She is dressed as an upscale hippie.

LARRY KING
Line 3! Arcata, talk to me!

ARCATA
As a daughter of the loving womb of Gaia, I rejected the male dominated, paternalistic, scrotal worshiping church years ago. But this spring, as I was squatting with my sisters in a uterus circle for peace, suddenly it struck me: what is the difference between a god that makes war, and a goddess that lets it happen? Nothing! That's why I started a CGFA chapter for the north coast! So they both can kiss my black heinie! Thank you, Angela!

ARCATA exits.

DE LOVE
Uterus circle?

LARRY KING
Amazing!

Phone rings.

LARRY KING
Line 4! San Francisco!

TODD enters, as if on phone.

TODD
I'm sorry!

ANGELA
Mr. Blendakin?

LARRY KING
You know this caller?

ANGELA

I used to.

TODD

Wait! Ms. Franklin. I wanted to tell you - I was wrong!

DE LOVE

Larry, what does this have to do with -

TODD

I have come from the Jesus Christ Loves You re-education camp! And I want to testify!

Religious musical sting!

ANGELA

Testify?

TODD

I have seen the light!

ANGELA, LARRY, DE LOVE

What light?

TODD

I saw hatred –
I saw cruelty –
I saw the nun in her thong!
And, as they burned my leather bound edition of Sister Wendy's Renaissance Nudes-

ANGELA

Oh, no!

TODD

Burned it in the name of Jesus,
I realized that Jesus had left the building!
And I asked myself.

Song: "PRINCE OF PEACE."

TODD

WHERE THE HELL IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE?

MAYBE HE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED, BETTER CALL THE POLICE.

GONNA FILE MISSING PERSONS

SO THE COPS'LL GO AND SEARCH ,

BUT I DON'T THINK THEY'LL FIND HIM INSIDE A CHURCH!

'CAUSE HE'S GONE, HE'S GONE -

THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

TELL ME WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIANS ARE THESE?
THERE'S WOLVES IN THE FLOCK,
AND THE SHEPHERDS ARE THIEVES.
THEY PREACH HATRED, THEY DON'T PREACH LOVE,
THEY MUCH PREFER THE EAGLE TO THE DOVE,
YEAH, HE'S GONE, HE'S GONE -
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

BETTER SEARCH THE WHITE HOUSE,
THEY MIGHT HAVE HIM LOCKED AWAY,

ANGELA

THEN TRY ABU GAREB,
AND GUANTANAMO BAY,
HE MIGHT BE THERE -

TODD

HE'S NOT HERE!
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.
I'VE CLEARLY SEEN THE ERROR OF MY WAYS,
I WANT TO STAND AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS WHO DRIVE
JESUS AWAY.
I KNOW THEIR METHODS AND THEIR PLAN OF ATTACK,
I WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY THAT IS FIGHTING BACK!
'CAUSE HE'S GONE, HE'S GONE -
I WANT TO JOIN THE ARMY THAT IS FIGHTING BACK!

HE'S GONE, HE'S GONE,

THE PRINCE OF PEACE!

TODD
I'm sorry Ms. Franklin. Sometimes it takes a while to see the truth. But when you do, it... grasps you -

ANGELA and TODD are again caught up in their nerdy arousal.

ANGELA
In the hot hands of the Enlightenment?

TODD
Holding us tightly, breathing it's steamy breath...

ANGELA
On the heaving bosom of -

DE LOVE
What are you two talking about?!

LARRY KING
Well, I'm sorry, Reverend, that's all the time we have. Ms. Franklin, Reverend De Love. Todd. Good Night everybody.

LARRY KING's set rotates off.

ANGELA
(still on the phone)
Todd? Todd?

Doorbell of ANGELA's office rings.

ANGELA
(to whoever is at the door)
Come in. (*to TODD on the phone)* Are you there?

TODD enters, on a cell phone.

TODD
I called from outside.

CARLOS and SARA enter.

CARLOS
Hey! It's the Jesus freak from the corner!

SARA
Mr. Blendakin! That was great!

ANGELA still seems wary of TODD.

ANGELA
Sara! I don't know if we can trust him...

TODD

But I can help!

CARLOS

How?

TODD

Right before I left the re-education camp I asked for a sign that would show the way to freedom. Then I walked into the meeting hall, sat down, and that's when I heard the blessed word!

CARLOS

What word?

TODD

Bingo!

ALL, EXCEPT TODD

Bingo?

TODD

All night it was like I couldn't lose! I won enough money to set up CGFA chapters across the State!

CARLOS

Newspaper and TV ads!

SARA

We can register tens of thousands!

ANGELA

This is amazing!

TODD

It was a miracle!

ANGELA

Mr. Blendakin, remember -

TODD AND ANGELA

No dogma in the Center!

ANGELA

I don't feel right - using JCLU money...

SARA

What better way to defeat them?

ANGELA

We could put it to good use!

CARLOS, TODD, SARA

ANGELA! ANGELA! ANGELA!

ANGELA

Oh, alright!

SARA

We got some phone calls to make!

CARLOS, SARA leave.

ANGELA

I'm... I'm glad you came back...

TODD

So am I.

ANGELA

It means a lot to me - us!

TODD

It means a lot to me, too. I just want to help you. Ms. Franklin?

ANGELA

Angela.

ANGELA and TODD exit.

SCENE 7

A MONTAGE OF TELEVISION AND RADIO SHOWS

Music of PBS' News Hour.

ANNOUNCER
Tonight, on the News Hour, "Iraq: where is it, and how can we get out of it?" And later "Iran: Where is it, and how can we get into it?" But first our discussion with Reverend De Love, Angela Franklin, and their continuing debate on the Mandatory Day of Prayer.

ANGELA
(holding big book)
Thom Paine said "Any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be true." Who are you to force your beliefs on our Democracy?

DE LOVE
We must bring this country back to God, as the Founding Fathers intended!

ANGELA
If the Founders wanted a religious nation, why didn't they put it in the Constitution?

DE LOVE
You have to read between the lines.

ANGELA
We, the people of -

DE LOVE
God -

ANGELA's frustration begins to build as DE LOVE smoothly and repeatedly inserts his "God."

ANGELA
The United States, in order to form a more perfect union --

DE LOVE
With God -

ANGELA
Establish -

DE LOVE
God -

ANGELA
Justice, ensure domestic -

DE LOVE

God -

ANGELA

(exploding)

God can kiss my black heinie!

Thunderous applause.

ANGELA

Darn it!

DE LOVE smiles, exits as ANGELA crosses from that part of the stage to what is an off-camera area. (This area will serve as the Green Room for each of her appearances through the montage.) TODD and SARA are in the Green Room, waiting, as ANGELA enters the area. SARA takes book, leafs through.

ANGELA

Maybe I should stop saying that...

TODD

What?

ANGELA

The whole God/kiss/heinie thing.

TODD

They loved it! People respond to passion! That's one thing I learned at the J.C.L.U. You've got to give the people what they want!

SARA

(point out line in book)

Here: "Persecution is not an original feature of any religion, but is always the feature of religion established by the State! Thom Paine!

ANGELA

Thank you, Sara.

TODD

We also have to get you a new outfit. The faithful love flashy leaders.

ANGELA

Really?

ANGELA, TODD, SARA exit.

ANNOUNCER

The Charlie Rose Show is made possible with generous contributions from the Ford Foundation, "Ford: building a better future", Exxon Mobile, "Exxon Mobile: fueling us to a better future", and Haliburton - "Haliburton, we are the future."

Velina Brown as ANGELA, Michael Gene Sullivan as DE LOVE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as SARA, Christian Cagigal as TODD Photo by Mike Melnyk

ANGELA and DE LOVE re-enter studio area.. ANGELA appears a little more glamorous, still has book.

DE LOVE
You know, Charlie, this country was not founded by Secular Humanists, but by Sacred Jesusists. Now, I admit Ms. Franklin's movement is growing. They've got tabernacles all over the state -

ANGELA
Not tabernacles - chapters. The CGFA does not rely on dogma to save America!

DE LOVE
Save America? Now you sound like a religion!

ANGELA
What is a religion? Something you believe in. Shouldn't people believe in the Bill of Rights without question? Shouldn't we have blind faith in Democracy?

ANGELA crosses out of studio to the Green Room, as SARA and TODD enter. SARA seems confused.

SARA
Blind faith in Democracy is why Liberals keep conceding elections!

TODD
If we want to convert people we can't just put them down. We have to give them something to believe in!

ANGELA
This is politics, Sara!

SARA
Wait! I have another quote for you -

ANGELA
Not right now!

ANGELA leaves the Green Room. TODD watches her, as SARA notices that ANGELA has left the book.

ANNOUNCER
And now...Daaaaavid Lettermannnnn!

DE LOVE
Dave, I just want to know...why this woman hates God so much. I mean, what did God ever do to her?

ANGELA
God hasn't done anything to me. It's just...

TODD
(whispering)
Something to believe in -

ANGELA
It's just that... I answer to - A different God!

DE LOVE
A different God? You see? A heathen!

ANGELA
I believe in God of Democracy, of Liberty! My holy book is the Constitution, and my Commandments are amendments!

ANGELA crosses out of studio to the Green Room.

SARA
Holy Book? You sound like one of them!

ANGELA
It's completely different! They're fighting for hypocrisy, and we're fighting for freedom!

SARA
But-

TODD
This is how the game is played, Sara!

SARA
(to TODD)
How would you know? You're an art teacher!

ANGELA
Todd is right! The Prayer Shield is down, the CGFA has chapters all across the west, and De Love and I were on the cover of the Utne Reader!

SARA
But he called you a bad teacher!

ANGELA
And I turned the other cheek.

TODD
Angela! Listen! The phones have been ringing off the hook! The Degeneres show, The View, and, oh my god, oh my goodness, Oprah!

ANGELA and TODD, excited, exit..SARA is even more confused.

SARA
Ms. Franklin... did... did you just quote a passage from the -

SARA exits.

SCENE 8

AT THE CGFA OFFICE

TODD is on the phone. He seems a little harried.

TODD
(on phone)
Yes...yes... Oprah was great! Yes, The final debate is tonight!

SARA enters, quickly.

SARA
She's gonna want her comb!

SARA, exits. TODD switches to another caller.

TODD
(on phone)
How are the Kiss My Heinie t-shirts coming along? No! Kiss My Heinie! And a big picture of Angela!

SARA renters, picks up pitcher and glass.

SARA
Now she wants her lemonade!

SARA exits.

TODD
(on phone)
Soon her heinie will be all over the state!

TODD hands SARA a comb. SARA exits

TODD
Yes? No, I am telling you... No, I am telling you...

SARA enters.

SARA
The Jose Eber comb!

TODD
(on phone)
Well, I'm sorry, but she does not have the time!

TODD hangs up.

TODD
I'll find it!

TODD exits. Phone rings, SARA answers.

SARA
Hello? No, she's busy right now.

ANGELA enters. She is a little more glamorous than the last time we saw her.

ANGELA
Who's on the phone?

SARA
Chris Matthews! He's been after you all day!

ANGELA
Give me that! Chris! Hello there! That? My assistant... Monday night? Of course I can! Well, have your people call my people! (hangs up) People! (hands phone to SARA) Ooooh! This is so exciting! TV shows, radio... and earlier today - Bill O'Reilly attacked me! It's all a dream come true!

SARA
I guess... You ready for the debate?

ANGELA
Of course! How do I look? Where's my comb?

SARA
Well, I got some quotes for you!

ANGELA
I can always depend on you, Sara.

SARA
"History furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government." Thomas Jefferson.

ANGELA shakes her head.

SARA
"In no instance have churches been Guardians of the liberties of the People" James Madison.

ANGELA shakes her head again.

ANGELA
What about Martin Luther King? He was a reverend. We don't want to sound anti - MLK do we?

SARA opens book.

SARA
I know you'll like this one: (reads) "All national institutions of churches are set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit." Thom Paine!

ANGELA
Sara, Sara! You're missing the point! We need to reach out to more people, and to do that we are going to give them what they want. And a little faith is what they want. How about this one - "It is the highest duty of every citizen to have unquestioning faith in Democracy, for that sacred religion encompasses all freedoms."

SARA
Unquestioning faith? Who said that?

ANGELA
Franklin.

SARA
Ben Franklin said a lot of strange stuff, but -

ANGELA
Not Ben. Angela. But you're right - maybe we should say it was Ben's...

SARA
And "sacred religion?" The CGFA is not a church!

An idea hits ANGELA.

ANGELA
What if... we were a church... Think about all the good we could do with that faith based money. Hmmmm... We could re-open the Center for Extended Studies! What are the poll numbers?

SARA
About 50/50.

ANGELA
What if, instead of being against the Prayer Amendment, we suddenly came out for it... but with a Secular prayer?

SARA
What are you talking about?

ANGELA
I'm talkin' about leverage. They can't pass this thing without us. What if, say, if we could get everybody praying not to God's, but to the Bill of Rights... and whatnot -

SARA
You want to dilute the message just to get more people to listen?

ANGELA
Well, if it's good enough for the Democrats... think of it -People worshipping freedom, without question!

Becoming frantic, SARA opens book

SARA
(reads)
"All national institutions of churches are set up to terrify and enslave..."

ANGELA
Don't quote the Age of Reason to me! I know the words of Thom Paine better than anyone!

SARA
His words, but you forget his meaning!

ANGELA
I haven't forgotten he died poor and alone! After the revolution everyone thought he was a Godless kook! But the words - those I can use!

SARA
But Ms. Franklin -

ANGELA
I am tired of you questioning me! *(slightly gangster)* Whom do you think you are?

SARA
(hurt)
I thought I was your teaching intern.

ANGELA
Well, I do not need no intern. I need my comb. And if you don't have it get out!

SARA, brokenhearted, exits.

ANGELA
Dis is my chance to do something big, save the country, and I'm not going to blow it. I gotta be... subtle. *(said as "sub-tle)*

I'm exhausted. *(She takes her first big swig)* Ahhhhh. *(alcohol hits her)* Oh! Talk about the times that try men's souls! I gotta take a nap before da debate... I don't want to look bedraggled for da... cameras... and ... what... not...

She falls asleep. A trapdoor opens, and a man in 18th century clothes enters. It is THOMAS PAINE.

PAINE
"All national institutions of churches are set up-"

ANGELA
Quiet... I'm trying to sleep-

PAINE
"Are set up to terrify and enslave mankind -"

PAINE slams trap door. ANGELA awakes with a start.

ANGELA
How did you get in here? Todd! Sara!

PAINE closes in on her.

PAINE
(furious)
Angela, you have turned your back on my words!

Angela
Who are you? How do you know my name? Why are you dressed like a doorman?

PAINE
You, who've invoked my name so often... but you don't recognize me?

ANGELA
Oh my goodness! It's the... it's -

PAINE
The Kook!

ANGELA
Thomas Paine? But you're -

PAINE
Not sleeping well in my grave!

ANGELA
What... what are you doing here?

PAINE
(disgusted)
A National Day of Prayer?

ANGELA
Oh. You heard that?

PAINE
I'm dead, not deaf! Madam, you are betraying everything I fought for!

ANGELA
It's just a tactic - to win people over, and such! It's temporary.

PAINE
By using the weapons, the very language of the theocracy, all you do is win their victory for them!

ANGELA
But it would be a national Church of Democracy, and such! And... and you could be our patron saint!

PAINE
I am not a God! And by making my principals into dogma, my words into your Bible, you've become as dangerous as those you fight against!

ANGELA
This is what we have to do to save the Republic!

PAINE
Some things cannot be compromised!

ANGELA
Well Thomas Jefferson said, "A government held together by the bands of reason only, requires much compromise of opinion."

Door bell followed by a knocking.

ANGELA
Come in?

A trapdoor opens, and another man in 18th century clothes enters. It is THOMAS JEFFERSON.

JefFERSON
Did I hear myself quoted. So, Paine, this is where you've got to -

JEFFERSON sees, ANGELA - a beautiful Black woman. He is aroused and intrigued.

JEFFERSON
Ahh...Thomas Jefferson, madam.

ANGELA
A...A...Angela Franklin.

JEFFERSON kisses ANGELA's hand.

JEFFERSON
Delightful. *(Suggestively)* Are you... free?

PAINE
Jefferson, for reason's sake man, I'm trying to dissuade this young woman from pandering to the...Cotton Mather's of today!

JEFFERSON
If you radicalize this woman, Paine, she will lose the power to influence people! (to ANGELA) His unyielding position toward religion lost him the affection of the masses he had previously inspired.

PAINE
No thanks to you Jefferson! You might have moderated the infamy that was inflicted upon me. You, Adams, Maddison, none of you believed in the divinity of Christ!

JEFFERSON
We did not state it publicly so that we could focus on what was important; proclaiming independence, creating a nation in which all men are created equal!

Victor Toman as JEFFERSON, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as PAINE
Photo by Mike Melnyk

PAINE
Yes, great words. I wonder how your slaves greeted them...

JEFFERSON
We had to yield on slavery to keep the union together, but (eying ANGELA) I've always believed in good race relations...

ANGELA is grossed out by JEFFERSON's advances, but sees him as an ally in the debate.

ANGELA
Mr. Paine, Mr. Jefferson is on the two dollar bill -

JEFFERSON
(proudly)
And the nickel!

ANGELA
He has streets named after him all over America! You ended up despised, forgotten - You don't even have a commemorative plate! He was a truly great man. He understands the importance of giving people what they want and of doing whatever it takes to achieve ones goal, (still slightly gangster) and whatnot.

JEFFERSON is taken aback.

JEFFERSON
Madam, you overstep. To compromise is not to pander. Or as you say today -

PAINE
- sell out!

Song: "THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS "

PAINE

YOU, MADAM, ARE A COWARD =

JEFFERSON

OR WORSE!

PAINE

BUT A CHAMPION OF REASON IS SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT!

YOU ARE SEDUCED BY THE SIREN'S SONG OF NOTORIETY,

AND HAVE LOST YOUR POWERS OF CRITICAL THOUGHT.

JEFFERSON

NO PATRIOT WORTH A WHIT,

WOULD SURRENDER WITH SUCH ABANDON,
THEIR COMMITMENT TO ENLIGHTENMENT AND REASON,

PAINE

AND TO DO SO IN A COUNTRY
THAT CLAIMS THE MANTLE OF FREEDOM
IS A CRIME GREATER THAN TREASON!

PAINE AND JEFFERSON

THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS!
DON'T STAND IN THE DOORWAY, DON'T BLOCK UP THE HALL!
THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS!
WILL YOU TURN A DEAF EAR TO LIBERTY'S CALL?

PAINE

BY DONNING THE ROBES OF THE INFALLIBLE SHEPHERD
YOU WRONG YOURSELF AND THE NATION,

JEFFERSON

THERE IS COMPROMISE THAT SERVES AND
COMPROMISE THAT CRIPPLES,
TO NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCE IS AN ABERRATION!

PAINE

BETWEEN FAITH AND REPUBLIC THE LINE HAS BEEN DRAWN.
IN 1787 WE ENDED THE DEBATE -
THERE IS NO PROHIBITION ON ANY RELIGION,
IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE!

PAINE AND JEFFERSON

THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS!

DON'T STAND IN THE DOORWAY, DON'T BLOCK UP THE HALL!

THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS -

WILL YOU TURN A DEAF EAR TO LIBERTY'S CALL?

PAINE

In my time I tried to convey the danger of power hungry thieves cloaked in religious garb. Now who will take up the fight?

JEFFERSON AND PAINE

Who?

JEFFERSON and PAINE look expectantly at ANGELA.

ANGELA

Gosh darn it - I will! Again!

ANGELA returns to chair, and goes back to sleep. PAINE and JEFFERSON shake hands.

JEFFERSON

Good work Thom.

PAINE

Thank you Thom.

PAINE and JEFFERSON open the trapdoor, begin to exit invigorated.

PAINE

Where does Hillary live? John Kerry?

JEFFERSON

I know where Feinstein lives. Let's go there first!

PAINE and JEFFERSON exit.

SCENE 9

AT THE CGFA OFFICE

ANGELA is tossing and turning in her sleep. TODD enters. ANGELA awakes with a start.

ANGELA

Todd! What's going on?

TODD

It's okay! I have your comb!

ANGELA

Where are they?

TODD

Who?

ANGELA

I was just talking ...he was...

TODD

You must have been asleep. It was just a dream.

ANGELA

It wasn't a dream - it was a visitation!

SARA enters, in coat with backpack.

ANGELA

I feel born again!

SARA

Born again? Oh, man, this is where I left last time!

ANGELA

Sara! I've had a revelation!

ANGELA gives SARA a big hug.

SARA

Ms. Franklin, I just came in to say one last time that making a religion out of Democracy -

ANGELA

Is absolutely wrong!

SARA

(stunned)

What?

ANGELA
We can't use their tactics to beat them! We can't out religious them, and if we did, all we'd have done is make the country into what they want! "The greatest tyrannies are always perpetrated in the name of the noblest causes."

SARA
Thom Paine!

ANGELA
Good girl!

TODD
But what about religious people who believe in Democracy? What should we do when our faith... grasps us...

Once again ANGELA and TODD begin to get caught up in their nerdy passion. They get closer

ANGELA
Then you must hold onto the First Amendment, with the hot hands of Reason...

TODD
Holding us tightly, breathing the steamy breath of citizenship...

ANGELA
On the heaving bosom of Secular Government!

And this time, with nothing to stop them, they FINALLY kiss! DE LOVE and JESUSMARYJOSEPH enter. The SISTER is carrying a large Bible.

DE LOVE
(to ANGELA)
Well, Sister I wanted to wish you...Are we interrupting?

ANGELA
(embarrassed)
No! Not at all. We were just... discussing some changes to my debate points.

DE LOVE
Changes?

ANGELA
I'm just going to tell everybody I was wrong! Democracy isn't about faith, it's about thinking, and using your Common Sense!

DE LOVE
That's... that's quite a change -

ANGELA
If this destroys the CGFA, fine! We'll start again, and this time we'll stick to our ideals, and do it right. I'll see you on stage Reverend De Love. Let's go.

ANGELA exits with SARA. TODD tries to follows, but is stopped by SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH.

DE LOVE
Yous ain't goin' nowhere, choir boy!!

TODD
I'm going to help Angela!

DE LOVE
(furious)
All da time and money we have put into dis scheme, and at da last minute dis broad -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Do not get upset, Boss! You will get all sweaty!

DE LOVE
(to TODD)
You had best get dat dame back on message, or else -

TODD
You promised you wouldn't hurt her!

DE LOVE
Dat we did! And so far -

TODD
You made me lie to her! You said if I didn't help you turn the CGFA into a church, you'd kill her!

DE LOVE
Kill? Kill? I did not say kill!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Actually I think the term was rub out.

TODD
The only reason I'm doing this is to save Angela!

DE LOVE
And she is perfectly safe - as long as yous keep her on track! Dat's why we let yous win all dat Bingo money, why we made yous to come back here!

jESUSMARYJOSEPH
Yeah! Normally da only way outta Gods house is feet foist.

DE LOVE
Look, Todd, once the CGFA is a church den it can be part of da Syndicate! Think of it. Millions in faith based-money with which yous guys could educate and what not, and so forth, and like dat dere.

TODD
What about the Prayer Amendment?

DE LOVE
She backs us in the polls, and she could have the pray howsoever she wants it. It does not matter even if a secular Church ends da separation of Church and -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Da uddah thing -

DE LOVE
As long as da separation is closed!

TODD
How can I trust you? Everything you said to me is a lie!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
(flirty)
Not everything, my little communion wafer.

DE LOVE
You want something to trust? Trust this: you make sure dis joint becomes a church, or da CGFA will not have a leader -

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
It will have a martyr!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH pulls a gun out of her bible.

TODD
Oh, no!

DE LOVE
One word about changing course, and Ms. Angela Franklin is going to find out real quick which theory of da afterlife is correct.

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
Move it, brown eyes!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH pushes TODD out, followed by a smiling DE LOVE.

SCENE 10

A STAGE AT AN OUTDOOR ROCK CONCERT

Onstage at another concert: ROCK THE LORD III

ANNOUNCER
Welcome ladies and gentlemen! Welcome brothers and sisters to Rock the Lord Crusade San Francisco! Tonight, the final debate between God's own, Reverend CB De Love, and Angela, Kiss My Black Heinie, Franklin. But first, let's give an awesome PacBell/SBC/AT+T Park welcome to MC Constantine and the Ministry of Rap!

Two rappers - MC CONSTANTINE and RAPPER #2 enter. RAPPER #1 is a gaudily dressed man, RAPPER #2 is a scantily dressed woman, and every line she says is seductively delivered.

Song: YOU GOTTA GET WITH JESUS.

MC CONSTANTINE
(spoken) Yo, yo, yo. Wuz up? I'll tell you WHO'S up!

RAPPER #1 points to heaven.

MC CONSTANTINE
Check it!

MC CONSTANTINE
ALL THOSE SINNERS
OUT THERE GOT THEIR

MC CONSTANTINE AND RAPPER #2
SUCKAH MC'S

MC CONSTANTINE
BUT WE GOT THE

MC CONSTANTINE AND RAPPER #2
MASTER MC JC

MC Constantine
WE GOT JUHEEZUS IN THE HIZOUSE

HE'S EVERYWHERE.

MC CONSTANTINE AND RAPPER #2
PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR

IF YOU WANNA SAY A PRAYEEER!

Velina Brown as RAPPER 2, Lisa Hori Garcia as MC CONSTANTINE

MC CONSTANTINE
HAVE YOU EVER FELT LUST AND THOUGHT IT WAS LOVE?

THAT AIN'T LOVE - IT'S A SIN

RAPPER #2
(sensuously)

IT'S A SIN!

MC CONSTANTINE

THE ONLY WAY TO LOVE IS THRU OUR LORD ABOVE,

YOU GOTTA LET HIS LOVE LIGHT IN.

RAPPER #2
(sensuously)

LET IT IN...

MC CONSTANTINE

FOLLOW ME, I'LL TAKE YOU ON A MISSION,

I'M GONNA SHOW YOU HOW TO GET JIGGY LIKE A CHRISTIAN!

HEY GIRL, YOU LOOKIN' FINE TODAY -

HOW'D YOU LIKE TO GET WITH ME AND PRAY?

YOU CAN JOIN MY CREW, WE BE FIGHTIN' FOR THA LORD

HELP ME SLAY THE HEATHEN'S WITH MY CHRISTIAN SWORD!

LORD KNOWS I'D LIKE TO SPIRITUALLY DO YA

SO LETS SAY A COUPLE A PRAYERS AND A

RAPPER #2

HALLELUYAH!

MC CONSTANTINE
NO DOUBT,

WE'LL BE ABSOLVED OF OUR

MC CONSTANTINE AND RAPPER #2

SINS OF TEMPTATION

MC CONSTANTINE

WHEN WE VOTE TO BE A CHRISTIAN NATION

RAPPER #2

IF YOU WANNA GET WITH ME YOU GOTTA GET WITH JESUS...

MC CONSTANTINE

YEH I'M GONNA GET WITH YOU CUZ WE GOT JESUS

IN THE HIZOUSE

RAPPER #2

IF YOU WANNA GET WITH ME YOU GOTTA GET WITH JESUS...

MC CONSTANTINE

PUT YOU'RE HANDS IN THE AIR IF YOU WANNA

SAY A PRAYEEER!

RAPPER #2

IF YOU WANNA GET WITH ME YOU GOTTA GET WITH JESUS...

MC CONSTANTINE

WE'RE GETTIN JIGGY WITH JESUS

RAPPER #2

IF YOU WANNA GET WITH ME YOU GOTTA GET WITH JESUS!

MC CONSTANTINE

Yo, yo, yo, yo. Now, let's give it up for the reverend C.B. De Love!

RAPPER #1 and RAPPER #2 exit. DE LOVE enters.

DE LOVE

Brothers and Sisters, I have glorious news! God is coming back to America! All across the country support for the Mandatory day of Prayer is soaring! Utah, 68%! Florida, 100%! Ohio, 114%! Now that is devotion! And it does not matter if they pray to Jesus, Yaweh, Buddha, Allah, they all believe in a higher power that can protect us from the sin from within and assault from without. What do you believe in? What do you believe in? Whatever it is I want you to give yourself over to your faith, and join us under God's Godly Shield! Bless you all. Now let me introduce our special Rock the Lord Guest, and my debating adversary - Ms. Angela Franklin!

ANGELA enters.

ANGELA
Citizens - I know what you want me to say - have faith in Freedom, faith in Liberty! But I was wrong! A country cannot operate on blind faith. Religion is about unquestioning faith, but Democracy is about critical thinking - and those two things have nothing to do with each other!

Suddenly SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH, unseen by ANGELA, appears in the rafters above the stage. She pulls a pistol out of her bible.

ANGELA
I forgot that for a while. But as Thom Paine said -

ANGELA stops herself, and looks at the large Thom Paine book TODD gave her, which she is carrying.

ANGELA
You know what? It's not about what he said. I made this book my Bible, and I stopped thinking. And that's an insult to Thom Paine, or anyone who fought for Democracy!

SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH raises her gun, aiming it at ANGELA. TODD enters. He sees SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH preparing to shoot ANGELA

TODD
Angela!

ANGELA
Thanks, Todd.

ANGELA hands the book to TODD.

ANGELA
This country is an experiment - conceived in reason, not religion! And the separation of Church and State goes both ways - Keep your God out of my Government, and I'll keep my Government out of your Church!

Still clutching ANGELA's book in his arms TODD suddenly leaps in front of ANGELA as a shot rings out! TODD falls to the ground.

TODD
Angela...

ANGELA
Todd!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
(heartbroken)
Sugerbumps!

DE LOVE
(to JESUSMARYJOSEPH, in full gangster mode)
How could yous miss?

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
(truly touched)
He got in the way! Now that's real love...

DE LOVE turns to the crowd, back in preacher mode, and trying to take control of the situation.

DE LOVE
Brothers and Sisters! A freedom hating terrorist has attacked us!

ANGELA is cradling TODD's head in her arms.

ANGELA
Todd! Can you hear me?

TODD
Angela... is that you?

ANGELA
Oh, Todd, you saved my life.

Velina Brown as ANGELA, Christian Cagigal as TODD, Michael Gene Sullivan as DE LOVE, Victor Toman as SISTER JESUSMARYJOSEPH Photo by Mike Melnyk

TODD
I couldn't let anything happen to you, Angela...

DE LOVE
(to crowd)
You hear that? He sacrificed himself for her - like Jesus!

ANGELA
Don't talk! Save your strength!

DE LOVE
(to crowd)
He's saving his strength for prayer!

TODD
It's okay, it doesn't hurt anymore...

DE LOVE
(to crowd)
God has taken away his pain!

TODD
(to DE LOVE)
Shut up!

ANGELA notices that TODD seems kinda strong for a guy who just got shot.

ANGELA
Todd?

TODD
Wait a minute... You know what...

TODD stands up, checks himself. He seems unhurt. TODD and ANGELA look at the large book he still holds. TODD opens it, and pulls out...a bullet.

ANGELA
It's a miracle!

TODD looks sharply at ANGELA.

ANGELA
My bad.

TODD
Oh, it's not just a miracle! It's... evidence! And I'm going to keep it right here.

TODD puts the bullet in his pocket, and crosses to DE LOVE.

TODD
And if anything ever happens to anyone I know, I might have to turn it over to the police... and whatnot!

JESUSMARYJOSEPH
(scared, to DE LOVE)
What do we do now?

DE LOVE
(gangster)
Do not worry about it.

DE LOVE turns to the audience, again in preacher mode.

DE LOVE
Brothers and Sisters, the time for debate is over! God has given you, given America a choice - do you want to live in a nation of God, or do you want a nation of secular Humanization? A nation of intellectual cogitation? A nation where Church and State has a separation? Do you?

TODD taps DE LOVE on shoulder.

TODD
Yes.

TODD hits DE LOVE with the book, knocking him out. TODD then turns to ANGELA.

TODD
Go ahead.

ANGELA
(to audience)

THESES ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS!

ANGELA AND TODD

WE CAN SEE THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT,

WHOSE SUPERSTITIONS KILL THE LIGHT,

OF REASON AND LIBERTY,

AND THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE?

SARA enters, and PAINE appears from above.

ALL

SURVIVAL IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE!

IF WE DIE OR GIVE UP, THEN THEY WIN.

LETS FIGHT FOR ENLIGHTENMENT AND REASON,

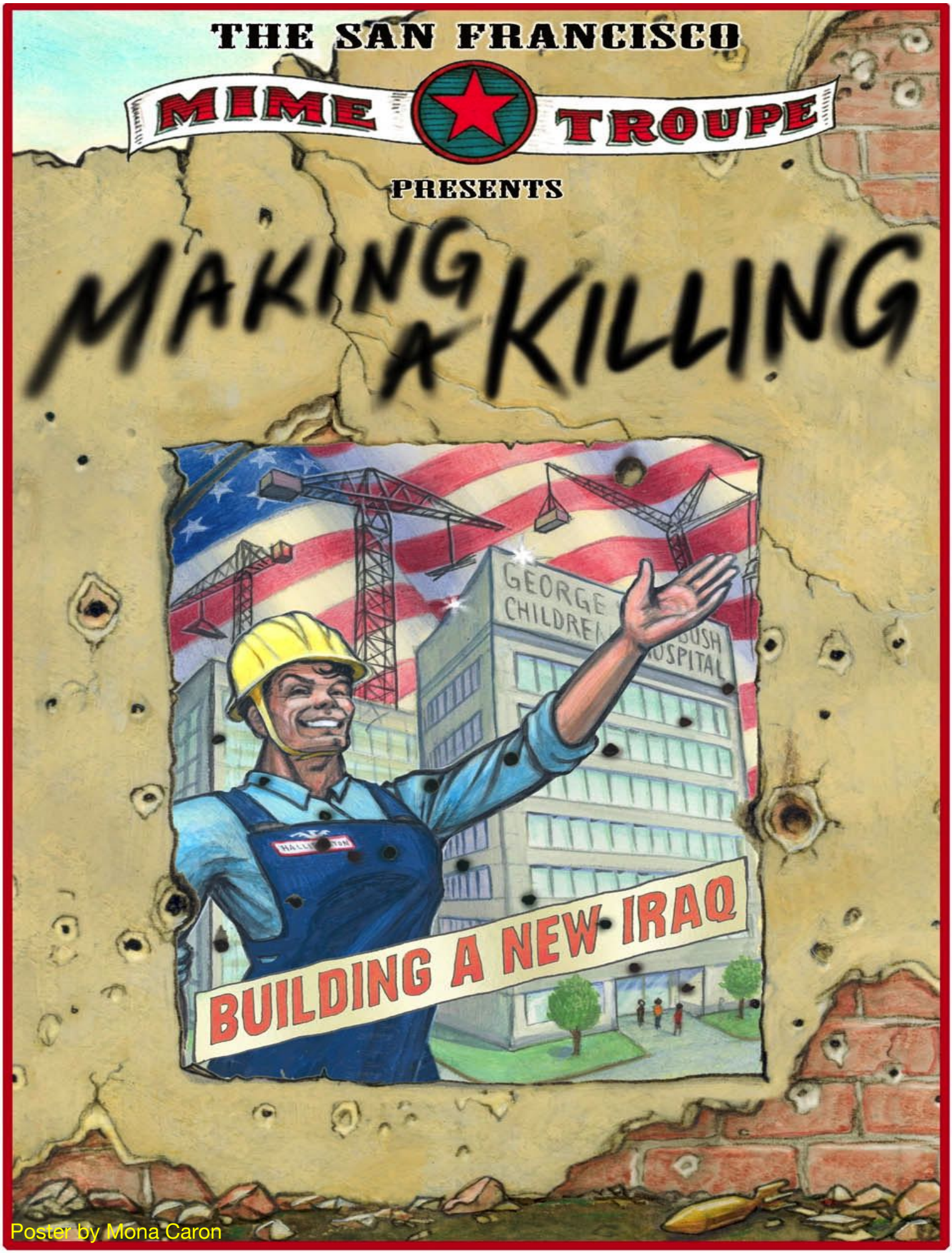
LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN, LET'S BEGIN!

End of play

Making A Killing

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan, with Jon Brooks

Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran
Additional Lyrics by Velina Brown


THE SAN FRANCISCO
MIME TROUPE
PRESENTS
MAKING A KILLING
GEORGE
CHILDRE
BUSH
OSPITAL
BUILDING A NEW IRAQ
Poster by Mona Caron

America has a long history of wrapping the benefits of democracy in a big fat bundle of corporate interests when we “help” some struggling country, and the privatization and sweetheart deals for American Business normally pushes any promised freedom even further down the road.

Inspired by the biography “Confessions of an Economic Hitman,” “Doing Good” is about an idealistic couple wanting to have a positive impact in a post-colonial world. Spanning from the 1970’s to the present this is a story of how the best intentions of individuals can be twisted to serve corporate hegemony, how democracy has been undermined in the name of progress, how entire nations have been ensured in perpetual debt and suffering, and shows how Disaster Capitalism is nothing new - it’s been business as usual for decades.

"Part savagely acute political satire, part living newspaper, and all broad, tuneful and timely musical comedy, "Killing" is the Mime Troupe's most direct grapple yet with the war in Iraq. It's very funny and equally politically engaged."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

“After years of seeing and admiring work of the Mime Troupe I had the chance to work with them in an unexpected way: I was a teacher in the early days of the Mime Troupe’s Youth Theater Project (in those days called “Yo! Youth Speaks!”) Alongside my fellow Troupers I loved working with those students in the Bayview (a working-class district in San Francisco,) opening their minds and hearts. new skills, daring those young artist to be expressive, commit to their words and learn the power of their voices in the world. That is all we hope to do as artists. I still loved the shows but their work with youth still inspires me in a completely different way.

COLMAN DOMINGO, BROADWAY, TELEVISION, FILM ACTOR, AWARD-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT

CAST OF CHARACTER
Prosecutor
Emiliano Jones
Fantasy O'Doul
Mahjub
Colonel Randolph
Marcus Johnson
Aide
Dick Cheney
Condoleezza Rice
Sargent
Tortelli
Williams
Girl Scout
Sweeping Man/Dr. Khalifa/Nurse
Nan
Walters
Anchor
Announcer
Reporter #1
Reporter #2
Flunky
Nitwit
Photographer

MAKING A KILLING opened on July 4th, 2006, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.

The production was directed by Ellen Callas with the following cast:

Prosecutor, Mahjub, Girl Scout, Reporter #2……Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Emiliano Jones, Aide……..Victor Toman*
Fantasy O'Doul, Anchor, Condoleezza Rice, Sargent……Velina Brown*
Colonel Randolph, Williams, Sweeping Man/Dr. Khalifa/Nurse,
Reporter #1, Photographer……..Michael Gene Sullivan*
Marcus Johnson, Walters, Anchor, Announcer…….Kevin Rolston*
Flunky, Dick Cheney Nitwit, Tortelli, Nan……Ed Holmes*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

INTRO

A COLOR GUARD smartly enters and present an elaborate drill team display.

COLOR GUARD

Forward march.
Reverse colors.
Reverse colors.
Colors halt.
Present colors.
Order colors.
Forward march.

The COLOR GUARD exit as the stage changes to –

PROLOGUE: IN A COURTROOM

THE INTERIOR OF A COURT ROOM.

Two uniformed people enter - The PROSECUTOR - a smartly dressed, efficient woman, and CORPORAL. EMILIANO JONES a brave but handcuffed soldier. The PROSECUTOR steps forward and addresses the audience as if they were the judge. (NOTE: All lines in italics are spoken in the courtroom as part of the trial, all normal text lines are in flashback scenes. Courtroom (italicized) lines will sometimes occur in the middle of flashback scenes. Also there is a dropflap/television built into the set, through which actors will appear in all of the ANCHOR scenes and interludes.)

Song: "CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION"

PROSECUTOR

YOUR HONOR, OFFICERS OF THE COURT -

TODAY YOU SHALL HEAR THE CASE OF

CORPORAL EMILIANO JONES,

2ND BATTALION, BAGHDAD, IRAQ.

PREPARE YOURSELVES, FOR HE IS NO

ORDINARY SUSPECT,

AND THIS IS NO ORDINARY TRIAL,

FOR THIS IS A CASE OF...

Very dramatic music as PROSECUTOR whips off her glasses.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

MURDER MOST FOUL!

JONES
(desperately)
But I didn't do it!

PROSECUTOR
Murder, I say!

THERE IS NO DOUBT

THAT CORPORAL MARCUS AURELIUS JOHNSON

WAS KILLED,

I PUT IT TO YOU THAT THERE IS NO DOUBT

THAT THE MAN WHO STANDS BEFORE YOU IS

HIS COLD BLOODED MURDERER!

JONES
No!

PROSECUTOR
MURDERER!

JONES
No!

PROSECUTOR
MUUUURDEEEREEEER! But... I don't want to prejudice you. Perhaps he didn't do it...

JONES
Why would I kill Corporal Johnson?

PROSECUTOR
That is what we are here to find out! So pay attention, for this is a story of love and hate, friendship and betrayal! And I am sure that after hearing the evidence you will return a verdict of GUILTY!

JONES
Guilty - no!

PROSECUTOR
Guilty - yes! But let me go back to the beginning: It all started innocently enough - Spring in Iraq. Jones was a reporter for an army news paper. Johnson was a fresh recruit, and both of them were about to be assigned to the story that would change their lives... forever!

SCENE 1

FLASHBACK - A USO SHOW IN THE GREEN ZONE, US OCCUPIED IRAQ

The scene shifts to the stage during a performance of a USO concert.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, officers and non-coms. The USO is proud to present the one, the only, Miss Fantasy O'Doul!

A singer, FANTASY O'DOUL, a beautiful and extravagant performer/diva, enters.

Song: "IT'S MY DUTY TO SHAKE THIS BOOTY"

FANTASY

WHERE THERE'S LOVE THERE IS AMERICA,

YOU ARE SAFE INSIDE HER ARMS.

AND IF YOU LOOK TO FIND AMERICA

WE'RE EVERYWHERE – DON'T BE ALARMED.

OOOH, AMERICA, AMERICA

THE WORLD IS YOURS TO FREE,

OOOH, AMERICA, AMERICA

WE SERVE YOU FAITHFULLY.

The song breaks into a very funky beat. Two back-up flyboy dancers in army pants and mesh tops enter, begin to dance as the song shifts from reverent to raunchy.

FANTASY (CONT'D)

I'M HERE TO GIVE PROPS TO THE SOLDIERS WHO

PROUDLY REPRESENT THE RED WHITE AND BLUE.

IF YOU WANT TO BE AMERICAN

THROUGH AND THROUGH

YOU GOTTA DO WHAT YOUR COUNTRY

TELLS YOU TO DO!

NOW I'M NOT SHAKING THIS BOOTY JUST
FOR THE APPLAUSE –
I'M GETTIN DOWN AND DIRTY TO
SUPPORT THE CAUSE
OF BRINGING FREEDOM AND LIBERTY
EVERYWHERE –
THAT'S THE HIGHER CALLING OF THIS
DERRIERE!

AND IT'S MY DUTY TO SHAKE THIS BOOTY.
HOLD YOUR HANDS UP IF YOU WANT TO
SALUTE ME!
IT'S MY DUTY TO SHAKE THIS BOOTY
HOLLA FREEDOM IF YOU LOVE ME
ABSOLUTELY!

I HEAR A LOT OF TALK ABOUT THESE
LIBERAL GROUPS
WHO OPPOSE THE WAR AND DON'T SUPPORT
THE TROOPS,
BUT WE ALL MUST PLAY A PART TO GET THIS
VICTORY WON
SOME CARRY GUNS, AND SOME –
SHAKE THEIR BUNS!

TO ALL THE ARMIES OF ONE,
TO ALL THE PROUD AND THE FEW,

YOU GOT A BACK THAT'S STRONG AND

A HEART THAT'S TRUE.

YOU DON'T ASK WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN

DO FOR YOU,

YOU DO WHAT YOUR COUNTRY

TELLS YOU TO DO!

AND IT'S MY DUTY TO SHAKE THIS BOOTY.

YOU GOT MY NUMBER IF YOU WANT TO

RECRUIT ME!

IT'S MY DUTY TO SHAKE THIS BOOTY.

SUPPORTING FREEDOM MOST

ABSOLUTELY!

AND I LOVE TO DO MY DUTY FOR YOU!

Wild applause she the number ends.

FANTASY (CONT'D)
Thank you! Good night! Remember 9/11!

As she begins to leave the stage JONES, and his assistant, an Iraqi, MAJUB, enter. JONES is doing his job as a reporter for the Army newspaper.

MAHJUB
Ms. O'Doul!

FANTASY
Paparazzi! Leave me alone!

JONES
Private Emiliano Jones.

MAHJUB
He's a reporter for the army newspaper.

O'DOUL points, frightened, at MAHJUB

FANTASY
Oh my God Is that AN IRAQI?

JONES
My assistant, Mahjub. He's my translator, and driver.

MAHJUB
We're doing an article about entertaining the troops!

FANTASY
Oooooh, a puff piece! Why didn't you say so? In that case –

FANTASY strikes a striking pose.

FANTASY (CONT'D)
Question away!

A FLUNKY enters.

Flunky
Fantasy! Plane flies in ten!

FANTASY
(to JONES) Follow, we can talk while I pack.

FANTASY and JONES exit. COL. RANDOLPH, a brusk, middle-aged regular Army officer, enters. RANDOLPH always speaks just under a barking shout, or harshly in one.

RANDOLPH
Mahjub Whaziri, where is Private. Jones! This is an emergency!

MAHJUB
Major Randolph, is there a problem?

RANDOLPH
The Army, in it's infinite wisdom, has decided to sideline all non-essential operations, and that includes our newspaper.

MAHJUB
The Daily Reveille?

RANDOLPH
Apparently the news in Iraq can be written cheaper somewhere else.

MAHJUB
Where?

RANDOLPH
Bangalore, India.

MAHJUB
We're being off-shored?

RANDOLPH
Ours is not to reason why, Whaziri! But the game isn't over yet! We have one, I repeat, one chance to save this paper! We must give the Army a great story, something they cannot get 2000 miles away. Something tender and human, caring and compassionate - preferably with children! We need a-

BOTH

Feel good story!

RANDOLPH

This is the new man - Private Marcus Johnson...

PRIVATE MARCUS JOHNSON, an fresh-faced, enthusiastic young soldier with a camera around his neck, enters.

MAHJUB

Photographer, huh? I ever seen your work?

JOHNSON

Only if you read the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater school paper! Three years, staff photographer. Go Warhawks!

JOHNSON emits a piercing shriek, flapping his arms. FANTASY and JONES re-enter.

FANTASY

(to JONES)

- and that's why I'll never eat oysters again! Now I really have to run!

(to JOHNSON)

Oooooh, a camera! Please, no pictures, I'm a mess - but if you insist!

O'DOUL flashes a big smile, gives flamboyant pose. FLUNKY enters.

FLUNKY

(to FANTASY)

Your reservations at Betty Ford won't wait!

FANTASY

(embarrassedly covering)

I'm... doing a benefit concert there -

FLUNKY

For six to eight weeks?

FANTASY shoots flunky a deadly look.

FANTASY

Hush! (To JONES et al.) Well, I'll see you boys later. Remember 9/11!

O'DOUL exits in a flourish, followed by FLUNKY.

RaNDOLPH

Private. Jones, have you finished your in depth article on the lovely and talented Ms. Fantasy O'Doul?

JONES

From her birth in a log cabin to her Ph.D in Advanced Bootyocity, sir!

RANDOLPH
Good! I have another assignment for you. A children's cancer clinic in the village of Matha Tureedeen. Got knocked out during a fire fight, now America is rebuilding it as: The Enduring Freedom Cancer Clinic... For Children!

JONES
Sounds like a slam dunk of compassion, Sir!

RANDOLPH
Mahjub Whaziri, you will fill Jones in on the clinic, you will take Privates Jones and Johnson to that village, and that story will be on my desk by tomorrow afternoon! Gentlemen, I am handing you this pigskin, and you will not fumble it!

JONES AND JOHNSON
Yes, Sir!

RANDOLPH
Do you understand, Private. Jones? No investigations! No exposes! This is a -

ALL
Feel good story!

RANDOLPH
Dismissed!

After salutes RANDOLPH marches out.

JONES
(unhappily)
Great! Outside the Green Zone, again!

MAHJUB
I understand there's been quite an increase in children's cancer cases in that village...

JONES
What?

MAHJUB
The last twenty years the numbers have skyrocketed. It is a mystery... I will bring the cab around.

MAHJUB leaves.

JOHNSON
Private Jones, let me just say what an honor it is to work with you. Everybody in the dorms in Whitewater read your articles... The iron boot of Capitalist cruelty -

JONES
Great –

JOHNSON
Power hungry mediocrity crushing freedom –

JONES

Okay –

JOHNSON

The fascist, racist corporatocracy... You really opened our honky eyes!

JONES

Just take the pictures.

JOHNSON

You don't remember me... (hopefully) do you?

JONES

Remember you...?

JOHNSON

You were on a lecture tour, talking about your life as a reporter -

JONES

(it starts to come back to him)

Whitewater, Wisconsin...

JOHNSON

And after the lecture, you went out for a drink...

JONES

That little bar downtown...

JOHNSON

With the leather dartboard -

JONES

And you were -

JOHNSON

(romantically)

Your bull's-eye.

JONES

Marcus!

JOHNSON

Emiliano!

JONES and JOHNSON embrace and kiss. They freeze as the PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH enter, as if in the courtroom. RANDOLPH is now testifying.

PROSECUTOR

How long had you known Jones was a homosexual?

RANDOLPH

I started to suspect last year at the Operation Freedom Hammer weenie roast and pot luck. He was just a little too proud of his paella...

JONES and JOHNSON come to life again, as PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH freeze.

JONES
Wait, we mustn't! This isn't Wisconsin!

JOHNSON
What are you doing here? I never took you for a military man.

JONES
(suggestively)
Though there was that one night...

JOHNSON
With the uniforms...

JONES
I joined up long time ago. I needed money to get through journalism school. Not many other jobs in my neighborhood. Got discharged in '95 and figured that was that. Then, ten years later, I get a call in the newsroom - reactivated! Next thing I know I'm back in khaki!

JOHNSON
At least you're an Autumn.

JONES
How about you?

JOHNSON
I'm more of a Winter.

JONES
No, how did you end up here?

JOHNSON
Military family. I thought I'd outsmarted them with the National Guard. Here I am. But now, with Emiliano Jones, Champion of Truth, Iraq is the place to be! I bet there are great stories here! What did that guy, Mahjub, say about this village... A mysterious increase in cancer cases - A cancer cluster... Maybe it's a story!

JONES
(intrigued)
In a little village in Iraq...

JOHNSON
What do you think?

Haunting Investigation music as JONES starts getting interested

JONES
Why here? And why the last twenty years...would...

JONES fights with himself as he tries to force down his journalistic instincts.

JONES(CONT'D)
Why...why...no! No! Noooooooo!

JOHNSON
Emiliano...?

JONES
I can't do it! No investigations! No Exposes! No! Noooooo!

Haunting investigative music.

JOHNSON
What's wrong?

JONES
It's nothing! It's just- you heard the Major. No investigations. Let's just get out to that clinic.

JONES starts to leave, but JOHNSON catches JONES, tries to comfort him.

JOHNSON
Wait, maybe this village has a Bed and Breakfast...

JONES
(getting caught up in the memory)
Like that place in Madison...

Pause. They are about to kiss again but JONES abruptly breaks it off.

JONES(CONT'D)
Come on!

JONES and JOHNSON exit as the PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH unfreeze.

PROSECUTOR
And did you have any idea that Johnson was also a homosexual?

RANDOLPH
No, Ma'am! I swear, if I'd known they were both batting for the same team I would never have put them in the same dugout!

PROSECUTOR
And the story about the clinic?

RANDOLPH
I just thought it would be a chance for Jones and Johnson to strap on their skates, step up to the plate, go deep, and take the winning shot for Team Daily Reveille!

But I had no idea how big that story would turn out, and I had no idea the impact it would have back in Washington…

RANDOLPH and PROSECUTOR exit.

SCENE 2

AN OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

There is a large desk with the Seal Of The Vice President of the United States on the front. On the television/dropflap a TV news ANCHOR is making a report.

ANCHOR

And tonight, after all the news of death and destruction we finally have some good news out of Iraq. From an Army Newsletter we hear that the war-torn village of Matha Tureedeen will soon be the home of the new Enduring Freedom Cancer Clinic. For Children! The new 10 million dollar clinic will house over 20 ailing kids! Now that's what I call a Feel Good Story!

An AIDE enters, turns off TV. The AIDE looks around the office, pulls out radio.

AIDE

(speaking into radio)

Code green! Code green! The Burger has left the box! I repeat, the Burger has left the box! No, I don't know where he is. He must be somewhere -

Suddenly a trap door opens, and Vice President Dick Cheney appears. He is fully dressed - except he is not wearing pants.

CHENEY

Undisclosed!

AIDE

Mr. Vice President!

CHENEY

What are all those reporters doing outside?

AIDE

Looking for you, sir. They have questions!

CHENEY

Any of the from Fox news?

AIDE

No, Sir. These are real reporters!

CHENEY

Don't we have laws against those?

AIDE

No, sir!

CHENEY quickly scribbles something, hands it to him.

CHENEY

We do now! Here, go shoot someone! Wait! With the Democrats in Congress there might be an investigation. Never mind! Maybe I'll just invite Lou Dobbs hunting... What time is it?

AIDE

2:30, Sir.

CHENEY

2:30! Why didn't you say so? I can't stand here planning assassinations all day! That's tomorrow. Send in my 2:00 appointment!

CHENEY snaps his fingers, and the AIDE takes a pair of suit pants out of the desk, begins to put them on CHENEY, who barely deigns to assist..

AIDE

Mr. Vice President...

CHENEY

A little trick I learned. Always keep them waiting, let's them know who's boss!

AIDE

About your 2:00 appointment...

CHENEY

By next summer everybody in this Administration will be looking for a job - everybody that hasn't been convicted, that is. And you know who corporations are going to remember when they are looking for CEOs and Board Presidents? The guy who showed them who's boss!

CHENEY is dressed. The aide slinks fearfully away.

AIDE

They cancelled.

CHENEY

Exxon?

AIDE

They had another meeting scheduled.

CHENEY

With who?

AIDE

Pelosi.

CHENEY

(disgusted)

What's the world coming to when you can't trust oil executives? Fine, send in my 2:10. I think Lockheed Martin has waited long enough.

AIDE
They're not here, either, Sir.

CHENEY
What?

AIDE
Apparently they're having lunch with Mitt Romney.

CHENEY
The Mormon? After all the business I've sent their way, and they meet with the Mormon? Well, let's see if God can resurrect their stock price after I give all their government contracts to Halliburton!

AIDE
Sir?

CHENEY
What is it now?

AIDE
The CEO of Halliburton left a message. The Board feel now that their move to Dubai is finished they would like to... Further distance themselves from –

CHENEY
From America?

AIDE
From you.

CHENEY is stunned.

CHENEY
But... I made that company!

AIDE
Apparently their association with you is having a negative impact on their stock prices.

CHENEY
You mean...

AIDE
You give corporate fraud a bad name, Sir.

CHENEY
Get out!

AIDE
Sir-

CHENEY
Leave me alone!

AIDE leaves CHENEY alone in his personal Wagnerian tragedy.

CHENEY (CONT'D)
Those ungrateful bastards! I de-regulated, de-socialized, outsourced and privatized everything I could lay my hands on! I gave corporate America the best government money can buy! They can't do this to me!

Song: "I'M NEVER GONNA FALL"

CHENEY.

I STARTED OUT WITH NOTHING,

NOW I'VE GOT IT ALL,

AND THESE SONS OF BITCHES DON'T

RETURN MY CALLS!

YOU GET UP TO THE TOP AND THEY

WANT TO SEE YOU CRAWL,

BUT THIS OLD MAN AIN'T NEVER GONNA FALL!

DON'T MESS WITH ME -

DICK CHENEY!

LINCOLN NEBRASKA, 1941!

A LOVING MOTHER HOLDS HER NEWBORN SON.

AND THE LORD LOOKS DOWN

ANOTHER JOB WELL DONE,

A NEW AMERICAN CENTURY HAD BEGUN!

THAT CHILD WAS ME -

DICK CHENEY!

I'M NEVER GONNA FALL!

I'M NEVER GONNA FALL!

I'M NEVER GONNA -

At this highpoint of the song CHENEY suddenly clutches his chest, and flops over his desk, dead. After a moment there is a knock on the door. It opens, and CONDOLEEZZA RICE enters. She is carrying a small stack of files and a newspaper..

RICE
Dick? Dick, I just came by to.... Oh.

RICE see CHENEY draped over his desk. Exasperated RICE pulls out a small, remote defibrillator, and pushes a button. CHENEY vibrates with the buzz, stays dead. Rice pushes the button again, CHENEY vibrates with the buzz again, this time re-animates.

CHENEY
Condi! How long was I down for?

RICE
No idea.

CHENEY
Last week I was down for five minutes. Now I can't tie my shoes, or remember the Seventies. Say, why are all those reporters outside?

RICE
Dick, we have to talk...

CHENEY
Any of them from Fox?

RICE
Dick - We need to talk. Do you think these episodes are having any lasting effect on your brain?

CHENEY
Heck, no! I'm still as sharp as I was at 68!

RICE
You're only 66.

CHENEY
There's nothing wrong with my brain!

CHENEY gives himself a cognitive test - patting his head while rubbing his belly.

RICE
Oh really? Then perhaps you can explain these:
(reads paper)
"The Vice-President still insists Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction will be uncovered in Iraq."
(reads)

"Cheney says use of torture is a no-brainer."

(reads)

"Global Warming is environmentalist propaganda!"

CHENEY

All this hogwash about pollution is just tree-hugging, granola headed Al Gore nonsense! There's nothing wrong with the air!

CHENEY takes a deep breath, clutches chest, drops dead. RICE pulls out remote, zaps him, and he revives.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

How long?

CHENEY attempts to pat his head and rub his belly. This time he fails.

RICE

A few seconds.

CHENEY

What year is it?

RICE

We're already unpopular enough -

CHENEY

Who cares about popularity!

RICE

Everyone, but you! We all want to have careers after the next election! Each time you open your mouth the entire administration poll numbers drop!

CHENEY

Don't worry. I still have some pull in corporate America. I'll take care of you.

RICE

I don't need your help – I just need you to stop talking to reporters! I have one solid offer - CEO of a company with a bad reputation that's looking for a popular face for the stockholders, and I don't want anything screwing it up!

CHENEY

Which company is it?

RICE

What?

CHENEY

Well maybe I can help.

RICE

(cagey)

I'd... rather not say.

CHENEY

Who is it?

RICE

You don't want to know.

CHENEY

Come on, you can tell me.

RICE

No, really -

CHENEY

Come on -

RICE

Alright! It's...

RICE flashed CHENEY a file with a large "H", and the word "Halliburton."

CHENEY

Halliburton! Condi!

RICE

Dick!

CHENEY

(deeply, dramatically hurt)

Behind my back?

RICE

I didn't want to tell you.

CHENEY

I feel so dirty! You and my Board - how could you!

RICE

I'm sorry, Dick, but it's time to face facts. America will never like you... ever. And you're pulling the rest of us down! Unless you can boost your positives, for the good of the rest of us, for the good of the Party, I'm afraid it's time for you to go to your undisclosed location...

RICE pushes another button on the remote in her hand, and the trap door CHENEY entered from pops open. CHENEY looks at the open pit.

CHENEY

For how long?

RICE

For good.

CHENEY

Condi...

RICE

Goodbye... Dick...

RICE walks to the door to the office, stops, looks back.

RICE (CONT'D)

(as if the end of a romantic affair)

We'll always have 9/11...

RICE exits. CHENEY is dejected, hurt as he begins heading for the oblivion of the trap.

CHENEY

So that's it. 40 years of service, and it's "Thanks for the wealth and dictatorial power, Dick. Don't let the door hit you on the way out." Fine. I... I could be popular. It's not so tough. Boost your - what was that word she used? "Positives!"

Halfway down the trap CHENEY stops at the thought.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

That's it! I'll go positive! A feel good story! No one will expect that from me!

CHENEY rushes back to his desk, riffles through newspapers.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

"Millions homeless...nah... oceans dead in fifty years...who cares...China buys Arizona..." Ah! Here it is! "The Enduring Freedom Cancer Clinic!" It's perfect! War torn land, devastated Iraqi families, disease ravaged children struggling to survive... I feel good just thinking about it!

CHENEY picks up phone.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

Get me the Press Secretary! I'll show them who's not popular! America will eat this up like crack covered donuts, then it's Goodbye CEO Rice, hello, Halliburton! Because tomorrow the front page of every paper in the country will be splashed with –

The television dropflap pops open, and the ACHOR appears on tv.

Anchor

The Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom Cancer Hospital. For Children!

CHENEY exalts, exits.

SCENE 3

COURTROOM/RANDOLPH'S OFFICE

In the court room the PROSECUTOR continues questioning RANDOLPH.

PROSECUTOR
And did anything change after the story of the clinic was printed?

RANDOLPH
Yes, Ma'am! The Army doubled the budget of the Daily Reveille.

PROSECUTOR
Did Jones and Johnson know how important the story had become?

RANDOLPH
Yes, ma'am!

PROSECUTOR fades back as the flashback begins.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
Private Jones, Private Johnson! Front and center!

JONES and JOHNSON enter, snap to attention.

JONES
Good morning, Major.

RANDOLPH
Do you not have eyes in your head, Private?

RANDOLPH points at his collar.

JOHNSON
(impressed)
Lieutenant Colonel!

RANDOLPH
At ease! I have a little something for you two, too. -

RANDOLPH suddenly acts as if he's a quarterback, with JONES and JOHNSON line up as receivers, going through a clearly familiar ritual.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
24! 57! Hut! Hut! Hike! Go long!

RANDOLPH drops back, JONES and JOHNSON run simple routes as RANDOLPH tosses each of them something. JONES and JOHNSON unwrap and examine the package. It is fresh insignia.

JONES AND JOHNSON

Corporal?

RANDOLPH

That little article of yours about the clinic turned some heads back in D.C.!

JOHNSON

Thank you, sir!

RANDOLPH

It's the Feel-Goodiest of Feel Good stories! After this team Daily Reveille we'll have it made! And when we get home, well be able to write our own tickets! We'll get everything we've ever wanted! Jones - you'll be able to investigate any story you want! Johnson, you'll be publishing books of you war photos!

JOHNSON

What about you, Sir?

RANDOLPH

Me? I've always wanted to be -

RANDOLPH can't bring himself to say it.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)

No...

JONES

Come on, Sir. You can tell us.

RANDOLPH

Well, I've always wanted to be... a TV war commentator!

JONES AND JOHNSON

Really?

Song: "FEEL GOOD STORY"

RANDOLPH

I CAN SEE IT NOW,

MY FACE ON THE TV...

PROVIDING EXPERT ANALYSIS OF

INSURGENT ACTIVITY.

I PUT IN MY TIME,

AND NOW THE TIME IS MINE!

TALK ABOUT A FEEL GOOD STORY,

I'LL BE LIVING IT!

(ordering JONES and JOHNSON)

Sing!

JONES AND JOHNSON

HE'S LIVING IT!

RANDOLPH

DOIN' ALL I CAN TO SPREAD THE

WORLD OF FREEDOM,

YOU KNOW I'LL BE GIVIN' IT

(ordering JONES and JOHNSON)

And dance!

JONES AND JOHNSON

HE'S GIVIN' IT!

RANDOLPH

25 YEARS DOING YOUR COUNTRY PROUD,

MAKES A MAN WELL QUALIFIED.

I'VE SEEN THOSE BIG SHOTS CHATTING

ON THE CABLE NEWS –

I'D LOVE TO BE THE ONE LOOKING OUT

FROM THE INSIDE!

TOO MUCH TIME SPENT STUCK IN AN OFFICE

ABOUT TIME THAT I'M LEAVING IT –

JONES AND JOHNSON

HE'S LEAVING IT!

RANDOLPH

MAMA BELIEVED I WAS DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

AND NOW I'M ACHIEVING IT!

JONES AND JOHNSON

HE'S ACHIEVING IT!

RANDOLPH

ALWAYS THOUGHT I'D MAKE A FINE FIELD OFFICER,

LEADING OUR TROOPS TO VICTORY.

BUT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF

WRITING THEM FEEL GOOD STORIES

NOW THEY'LL BE WRITING THEM

FEEL GOOD STORIES 'BOUT ME!

FEEL GOOD STORIES...

'BOUT ME!

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)

Alright, boy's I want you to get back out to that construction site -

JOHNSON

But they finished building the clinic.

RANDOLPH

They tore it down.

JONES

Tore it down? Why?

RANDOLPH

So it could be replaced it with the Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom Cancer Hospital! For Children!

JONES AND JOHNSON

The R.B.C.E.F.C.H.?

RANDOLPH

For Children! First - I want you to interview our boys guarding the construction site. "Risking their lives for Iraqi children!"(sound sting) Then talk to the Iraqi doctor who's gonna run the hospital - Dr. Khalifa. (sound sting) Finally I want you to talk to the contractors building the hospital - Nan Construction. (sound sting) Got it?

JONES AND JOHNSON

Got it, Sir!

RANDOLPH

Dismissed!

JOHNSON

Um... I just have one question...

RANDOLPH

Yes?

JOHNSON

Why the big increase in cancer in the first place?

JONES

What?

JOHNSON

I looked it up. Mahjub was right! Twenty years ago the cancer rates were normal, and now -

RANDOLPH

What are you saying?

PROSECUTOR

What was he saying?

RANDOLPH

I don't know Ma'am.

JONES

Colonel, would you excuse us, sir?

(JONES pulls JOHNSON aside)

Shut the hell up!

JOHNSON
At the Royal Purple we always said that the only bad question is an unasked question.

JONES
The Royal Purple?

JOHNSON
School paper. Go Warhawks!

JOHNSON emits a shriek again.

JONES
This is a story about building a hospital. For Children. Little kids, Smiling faces, SpongeBob!

JOHNSON
But hundreds of thousand kids with cancer? How does that happen?

Haunting investigative music..

JONES
(fending off sound)
No investigations! No Exposes! No! Noooooo!

RANDOLPH
You boys alright?

JONESA, ND JOHNSON
Yes, sir!

RANDOLPH
If you need me I will be in the Green Zone tonight- playoffs on the big screen. Carry on!

RANDOLPH crosses as if he has left room.

JOHNSON
Emiliano -

JONES exits.

PROSECUTOR
And why do you think the story was so important back home?

RANDOLPH
Ma'am, We are this close to winning this peace! So far bombing hasn't shown the Iraqis the benefits of the American Way, but if we build this hospital maybe they'll put down their jai lai rockets of hatred, and pick up our Football of Freedom, together we can kick this country right through the uprights!

RANDOLPH and the PROSECUTOR exit.

JOHNSON

Emiliano!

JOHNSON exits.

INTERLUDE:

A TELEVISION NEWS BROADCAST

On the television the ANCHOR reads the news.

ANCHOR

More good news from the lucky village of Matha Tureedeen. Chronically ill children are feverish with gratitude, and those with limbs are leaping for joy about the building of the new 15 million dollar Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom Cancer Hospital! For Children! The hospital will have beds for over 25 infirmed Iraqi. And here at home, a war weary public is grateful for some good news!

NITWIT

I don't support the War, cause war is, like, bad? But I do support the Troops because freedom's, like, on the march? And I never liked the Vice President before, because he's, like, evil? But if he's helping sick kids he can't be all bad? Like? It just makes me feel good! Remember 9/11!

SCENE 4

A WRECK OF A STREET IN MATHA TUREEDEEN, IRAQ

MAHJUB leads JONES & JOHNSON through the rubble. There is the constant sound of gunfire.

MAHJUB
The hospital is this way...

JONES
We were here three weeks ago, it wasn't like this!

Battle sound. MAHJUB, JONES, and JOHNSON dive for cover.

MAHJUB
That was before the Americans pacified the area.

JOHNSON
Don't these people know we are building this place for them?

Battle sound, as the three duck.

MAHJUB
Stay here. I'll go around front and see if it's safe.

MAHJUB waits for a moment between gunfire, exits. JONES is clearly scared.

JOHNSON
(to JONES)
You okay?

JONES
No, I'm not okay! This is why I write puff pieces! I want to get home.

JOHNSON
I understand...

JOHNSON starts to sing "Home" from "The Wiz"

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

WHEN I THINK OF HOME

I THINK OF A PLACE WHERE

THERE'S LOVE OVERFLOWING -

JONES
Marcus! This is no time for the Wiz!

JOHNSON
(shocked)
There's always time for the Wiz!

After a moment JOHNSON tries to engage JONES as a professional.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
So, got any ideas about this cancer cluster? Think it was something Saddam was testing?

JONES
No investigative reporting! Those are our orders!

JOHNSON
But aren't you a little curious -

Haunting investigative music starts.

JONES
(fighting against music)
We can't disobey orders!

JOHNSON
Emiliano, what's going on?

JONES
I'm sorry! Just take the pictures, alright? I'll write the story.

JOHNSON
Okay.

JOHNSON sees that JONES is really shaken, tries to comfort him again.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Hey, am I still your bear?

JONES
Of course you are. And I'm still your - Incoming!

An explosion! JONES and JOHNSON hit the deck. Automatic gunfire is all around them as a squad of U.S. soldiers – SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS – scramble onto the stage, looking for cover.

SERGEANT
(to her unit)
Get down!

One of the soldiers, TORTELLI, sees JONES and JOHNSON.

TORTELLI
(points gun at JONES and JOHNSON)
Enemy inside the perimeter!

JONES
Hold your fire!

WILLIAMS
(To TORTELLI, about JONES and JOHNSON)
Friendlies!

SERGEANT
(ordering)
FIRE RIGHT!

TORTELLI, WILLIAMS, and the SERGEANT suddenly pivot right and fire their weapons.

TORTELLI
(firing)
Take that, Osama!

SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS stop firing. SERGEANT turns to JONES and JOHNSON.

SERGEANT
Good thing you're here! We need all the help we can get!

JOHNSON
Where are they?

WILLIAMS
All around the construction sight!

JOHNSON
I'm on it!

JOHNSON bolts from cover, leaves.

TORTELLI
Covering fire!

TORTELLI sprays area with automatic fire..

SERGEANT
Outstanding! Now that is a soldier! Special Ops?

JONES
Photographer.

SERGEANT, TORTELLI AND WILLIAMS
What?

JONES
We're doing a story on the Hospital.

SERGEANT
Where'd he go?

JONES
To take pictures. Okay, let's get some good photos -

WILLIAMS
He's taking pictures of us?

SERGEANT
Corporal, we're kinda in a situation here!

JONES
I know, but Colonel's orders!

WILLIAMS
Oh no! It's...it's another -

ALL
Feel Good Story!

JONES
Get ready, give me an action shot... Go!

SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS suddenly break cover and hit a dynamic heroic pose. JONES looks for a signal from the direction JOHNSON ran. After a moment JONES gets the signal.

JONES(CONT'D)
Got it!

SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS dive for cover.

WILLIAMS
Man, I'm not even supposed to be here! My recruiter said I'd be learning website design on Maui!

TORTELLI
I was going to be a master chef!

JONES
Okay now, this time give me battle casual... Go!

SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS break cover to hit a relaxed, yet heroic pose. JONES looks for a signal again. After a moment JONES gets the signal.

JONES(CONT'D)
Great!

SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS dive for cover.

WILLIAMS

Wait! Listen!

JONES

Hey, they stopped shooting!

SERGEANT

(looking at watch) Zero ten hundred.

TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS look at watches, relax, put down guns.

JONES

Why? What happens at ten o'clock?

TORTELLI

Starbucks. Around the corner. Fresh muffins at ten.

WILLIAMS

Hey, I remember you. Weren't you here a few weeks ago?

JONES

Yeah, that was me.

WILLIAMS

You gonna put us in that article this time?

TORTELLI

Last time you were out here you didn't even talk to us!

JONES

That was for a clinic. Now it's the R.B.C.E.F.C.H.

ALL

For children.

JONES

It's a full page. What do you want to say?

SERGEANT

That it's an honor to defend this construction site.

WILLIAMS

Speak for yourself, Sarge.

SERGEANT

Come on Williams!

WILLIAMS

There's plenty places back home could use a hospital and don't nobody shoot at you tryin' to build it!

SERGEANT
He's from New Orleans.

WILLIAMS
Charity Hospital, hit by Katrina, flooded, still standing there empty. They could fix that up permanent with what we spend here in a day! And I would guard that for free.

JONES
(trying to ignore WILLIAMS)
Sarge, you were saying its an honor -

TORTELLI
(disdainfully, regarding WILLIAMS)
And when he's guarding his hospital, and you grab a kid for breaking a window you get sued! Here you just squeeze off a couple of rounds - problem solved! Learned that in Panama. And he wants to go home?

JONES
(trying to shut out TORTELLI's words)
So... Sarge, I guess it makes you feel good -

TORTELLI
Back there I'm just an out of work guy with a thousand yard stare. But here, man, I'm Rambo! Got life and death in my hand - I ain't lettin' go...

JONES is desperate to ignore the interesting stories of the soldiers around him, and stick to his assignment.

JONES
Sarge?

SERGEANT
Protecting this hospital? Yeah. This is what it's all about.

JONES
Great!

SERGEANT
Givin' these kids a chance does feel good-

JONES
Wonderful!

SERGEANT
I'd just hope somebody'd do the same for my girl.

JONES
She's with your husband?

SERGEANT
My Ex. Court let him have her when the Army extended my tour. Said I wasn't home enough, Judge gave him permanent custody. But it's all for something

worthwhile. When this place gets finished I'll take a picture, show it to my daughter, say see all those kids? That's why I was late coming back. She'll understand.

JONES
"Mother looses custody due to extended military duty..."

Haunting investigative music.

JONES (CONT'D)
No! I can't. No exposes! Okay. One last picture. Just be yourselves.

Finally SERGEANT, TORTELLI, and WILLIAMS just pose as themselves - just weary comrades in arms who love and rely on each other as only soldier can.

JONES (CONT'D)
Got it!

WiLLIAMS
Hey - here he comes!

WILLIAMS sprays the area with covering fire as JOHNSON dives on, but there is no returning fire.

JONES
(to Johnson)
Let's see whatcha got!

JOHNSON
Take a look!

All the soldiers crowd around to see the shots on JOHNSON'S digital camera. They oooh and ahh... Until they get to one picture. They all freeze.

WILLIAMS
Hey, who's that?

SERGEANT
It's one of them!

TORTELLI
You had one of them in your sights, and you took a picture?

JOHNSON
He's just a kid.

TORTELLI
With a rocket propelled grenade!

JOHNSON
He wasn't armed.

WILLIAMS
Just because you don't see it doesn't mean it ain't there!

JOHNSON
I couldn't just -

TORTELLI
Couldn't what - protect your fellow soldiers?

TORTELLI is scared and very angry.

JOHNSON
Fellas, we're not going to win hearts and minds by killing innocent kids!

TORTELLI
There's only one way folks are innocent in this Hell of a desert...

TORTELLI starts to raise his gun.

SERGEANT
Tortelli! Let's move out, soldier!

A tense moment.TORTELLI slowly lowers his rifle.

TORTELLI
Yes, Ma'am!

SERGEANT, and WILLIAMS exit. TORTELLI starts to follow them, stops, turns to JONES and JOHNSON.

TORTELLI (CONT'D)
(menacingly)
Hoo-rah...

TORTELLI exits.

JOHNSON
Man! There's so much going on here that no one is reporting!

JONES is seething.

JONES
No one, including us! Let's go.

JOHNSON
What's wrong?

JONES
Me? What's wrong with me? Nothing!

JOHNSON
You're not the man I met in Whitewater -

JONES
Maybe I'm not.

JOHNSON
That night you said for every easy story there's a great expose waiting to be written -

Haunting investigative music starts.

JONES
No exposes -

JOHNSON
– And for every simple feel good fact, there's an investigation crying out to be started!

Haunting investigative music grows to a maniacal crescendo.It Is driving JONES insane.

JONES
No... no investigations! No exposes! No! Nooooo!

JONES collapses..

JOHNSON
What is it?

JONES
(near tears)
I can't!

JOHNSON gently puts a hand on JOHNSON's shoulder.

JOHNSON
What happened to you?

JONES
(painfully, reluctantly)
It... It was my first week here. I caught a story I figured was going to rock this place! It had everything - political favors, corporate corruption, suffering soldiers- "Halliburton gives U.S. Troops untreated river water!"

JOHNSON
I read that! It was in the Times.

JONES
But I had it first! I wanted to tell the troops the truth- corporate government putting profit before patriotism! But instead the Army re-wrote it: "Halliburton supplies soldiers with natural spring water." And I got sent to a combat unit in... Sadr City!

It is clear JONES suffers from his experience in Sadr City, and JOHNSON finally understands JOHNSON's trauma.

JOHNSON
Oh, no!

JONES
(fearfully)
It was horrible! Every window a sniper hole, every alley a trap! I promised myself, if I got out of there alive, I would write whatever the Army told me to, anything, as long as they never sent me back... there!

JOHNSON
You poor thing.

JONES
Now you know. I'm not Emiliano Jones, investigative Reporter any more. I'm just Corporal Jones, purveyor of puff pieces!

Song: "A FACE LIKE YOURS."

JONES(CONT'D)

I USED TO THINK THAT I COULD SPEAK THE TRUTH

AND THE PEOPLE WOULD HEAR ME.

THOSE DAYS ARE DONE, NOW I'M SEEING THINGS

JUST A BIT MORE CLEARLY.

EVERYBODY WANTS TO THINK

THAT EVERYTHING'S ALRIGHT.

COMES A TIME WHEN YOU'RE TOO SCARED

TO PUT UP A FIGHT.

WHATEVER THEY WANT TO HEAR,

THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO WRITE,

IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO GET MYSELF

SAFELY HOME AT NIGHT.

JONES looks up into JOHNSON's face.

YOU'RE NOT IN WISCONSIN ANYMORE,

I'M NOT THE MAN I WAS BEFORE.

OUT HERE WE CARRY GUNS

WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO KISS.

WHAT'S A FACE LIKE YOURS

DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?

JOHNSON hugs JONES..

JONES(CONT'D)
Let's... just finish this story.

JOHNSON
(trying to be cheerfully reassuring)
Hey, don't worry - I'm sure nothing else will come up.

JONES and JOHNSON exit.

INTERLUDE: COURTROOM

PROSECUTOR

Corporal Randolph, what exactly were your orders to Jones and Johnson concerning this article?

RANDOLPH

Just tell the story of how America is building the hospital, and tell it in a simple, tasteful way.

PROSECUTOR

What was the article called?

RANDOLPH

"America Treats Terrorized Tots Tumors!"

PROSECUTOR

And you trusted them to follow orders?

RANDOLPH

Well, I knew Jones would deliver the story the Army wanted, but the new soldier, Johnson, I thought he seemed a bit squirrelly.

PROSECUTOR

Really? And did Johnson ever say anything squirrelly that might make Jones, I don't know – disobey orders, disgrace his country, and in a fit of rage kill his homosexual lover?!

The PROSECUTOR acknowledges a silent admonishment from the Judge.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, your honor. I'll rephrase. What do you mean, squirrelly?

RANDOLPH

Well, Ma'am, he was one of those kid reporters who thought everybody had an angle, that under every story was another story. Even with a story as feel goody as the hospital, he thought that somewhere someone was profiting somehow. <u>That's</u> what I call squirrelly, Ma'am.

PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH exit.

SCENE 5

AN OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

The door to the office opens, and CHENEY enters, fending off the vocal and adoring press corp outside..

CHENEY
Later, Gentlemen, later! I promise I'll answer all of you questions. And thanks for the flowers!

CHENEY closes the door.

CHENEY (CONT'D)
This is great! A month ago I was lame duck Dick... Now I'm Angelina Jolie hugging skinny Africans! Eat that, Secretary Rice!

The AIDE enters, as Press continues to clamor for CHENEY outside the office. The AIDE has a stack of portfolios emblazoned with different corporate logos.

AIDE
Sir! Your 2:45 appointment is waiting outside! Boeing...

CHENEY
Good!

AIDE
3:00 - Raytheon, 3:15 - General Electric, 4:00 - Honeywell, 5:30 - Lockheed Martin...It's amazing, sir! Ever since word got out about the hospital -

BOTH
For Children -

AIDE
Your popularity has skyrocketed into the mid-twenties!

CHENEY
Richard Cheney Freedom Cancer is an example of what I want to give to all the children of Iraq.

AIDE opens door. A GIRL SCOUT quickly scoots in..

GIRL SCOUT
(with cheerful awe)
Mr. Vice President!

CHENEY
What the hell is that? Shoot it!

AIDE
It's your 2:30, sir. A photo op.

The GIRL SCOUT presents CHENEY with a merit badge sash.

Song: "TROOP 17"

GIRL SCOUT

ON BEHALF OF THE GIRLS OF TROOP 17,

AND ALL THE SUFFERING CHILDREN OF IRAQ,

WE -

CHENEY

Yeah, yeah, hold on – where's the photographer?

AIDE

Photographer!

PHOTOGRAPHER enters.

CHENEY

Okay, go ahead.

GIRL SCOUT

(a little shaken, tries again)

On behalf of the girls of troop 17, -

CHENEY

You said that. Skip ahead.

GIRL SCOUT

(still trying to be cheerful)

FRIEND SHIP COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES,

LIFE IS FULL OF BIG SURPRISES,

EVEN HEARTLESS WICKED MEN,

CAN LEARN TO BE A FRIEND –

CHENEY

Get to the point.

GIRL SCOUT

In recognition of your humble service to the suffering children of the world I hereby award you the Merit Badge of Kindness!

PHOTOGRAPHER takes picture.

CHENEY

Thank you, thank you, thank you. And let me just say that -

Suddenly CHENEY clutches his chest, drops dead. The AIDE pulls out remote, re-animates him. CHENEY sees horrified GIRL SCOUT and he and the GIRL SCOUT scream.

CHENEY AND GIRL SCOUT
(screaming)

Ahhhhhh!

CHENEY

Who are you?

GIRL SCOUT
(terrified)

On...on behalf of the girls of Troop 17...

CHENEY

Oh, yeah. Did you get the picture?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yes.

CHENEY

Then scram! (to GIRL SCOUT) You, too! Wait...

CHENEY crosses to GIRL SCOUT.

Give me those cookies!

CHENEY snatches box of cookies from GIRL SCOUT

CHENEY (CONT'D)

Now scram!

AIDE shows tearful and traumatized GIRL SCOUT and PHOTOGRAPHER out.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

So... this is what it's like to be loved! (pause) It makes me itch.

AIDE returns with a portfolio that says "Halliburton."

AIDE
(excited)

Sir! They're here!

CHENEY

Who? You mean...?

BOTH

Halliburton!

CHENEY takes the portfolio, looks lovingly at it, then slams it down on his desk.

CHENEY

Let 'em wait! Let 'em all wait! Come next Fall I'll have my pick of Boardrooms! And don't think I'm going to forget how loyal you've been - waking me from the dead and all. Here!

CHENEY hands the AIDE the box of cookies.

AIDE

There's only one left.

CHENEY

And toss the box for me, would ya?

AIDE exits. CHENEY turns to Halliburton portfolio.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

And as for you... I can't stay mad at you!

CHENEY forgives, and does a pas de deux with Halliburton portfolio.

CHENEY (CONT'D)

And to think – I owe it all to a bunch a sick Arab kids. How much are we spending on that hospital? Forty millions? Make it fifty! And a hospital isn't enough anymore! I want something bigger! Grander! Get ready for the Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom International Cancer Treatment Hospital! For Children!

CHENEY exits..

SCENE 6

THE CLINIC IN MATHA TUREEDEEN

There is a plainly dressed man, the SWEEPING MAN, sweeping the floor of a run-down clinic, as JOHNSON and MAHJUB enter, carrying an injured JONES.

MAHJUB

We need a doctor in here!

SWEEPING MAN

What happened?

JOHNSON

Oh, man! That was... so...real!

MAHJUB

Of course it was real!

JOHNSON

Whoosh, BAM! That RPG right over us -

JONES

(in pain)

Watch the arm...watch the arm!

MAHJUB

Get Dr Khalifa!

SWEEPING MAN

Yes! Right away!

SWEEPING MAN exits.

JOHNSON

And you pushed me behind that car - you saved my life!

JONES

You were in the damn way! They're shooting and you're standing there taking pictures!

JOHNSON

A Warhawk never misses an opportunity for a story!

JOHNSON emits piercing shriek, flaps arms again.

JONES

Do you have to do that every time?

JOHNSON

Yes. Look at this place! And I thought Kaiser was bad.

MAHJUB
It wasn't always like this...

JONES
Before the War?

MAHJUB
And the Sanctions. And the other War. We had the best health care in the Middle east, the best medical schools -

JONES
You also had a dictator.

DR. KHALIFA enters, wearing hospital scrubs..

DR. KHALIFA
What seems to be the problem?

JONES
I'm going to lose my arm because of this jerk!

JOHNSON
You are such a baby!

MAHJUB
This place doesn't look like a hospital.

DR. KHALIFA
It's temporary. Unfortunately before we could build the new hospital - The old one had must torn down. But what are you gentleman doing back here?

JONES
A new building, and another article.

DR. KHALIFA
Well, I will be happy once again to answer any questions you have.

MAHJUB
Three weeks ago you did not tell us why the children here have cancer -

JONES
Mahjub -

DR. KHALIFA
Three weeks ago you did not ask why.

MAHJUB
That is because we did not know they where hundreds of cases!

The Haunting investigative music starts.

MAHJUB (CONT'D)
Was it chemical poisoning? Something Saddam was testing?

JONES

Hey!

JONES cuts off haunting investigative music.

JONES (CONT'D)

I'm the reporter! I'll ask the questions! So, doctor, what the America wants to know is, SpongeBob or Care Bears?

DR. KHALIFA

What?

JONES

On the walls, you know. For the morale of the kids.

Pause.

DR. KHALIFA

It wasn't industrial poison -

MAHJUB

I knew it!

Haunting investigative music starts again.

DR. KHALIFA

And Saddam's arms programs were a lie! I think it was -

JONES cuts off haunting investigative music again.

JONES

Whoa! Time out! Is there someone else we could talk to?

JOHNSON

Why? We were just getting to the good stuff.

DR. KHALIFA

You mean... the... rest of the staff?

JONES

You know, another doctor -

JONES goes to look down hall, but Khalifa races to cut him off.

DR. KHALIFA

No! They are with patients! We are very busy, stretched very thin!

JONES

How about a nurse?

DR. KHALIFA

Of course... Just a moment. I'll... find one...

KHALIFA leaves. JOHNSON looks around.

JOHNSON
For a translator you sure act like a reporter!

MAHJUB
This cancer is what someone should be writing about!

JONES
America doesn't care about why these kids are sick! We just want to know they're getting better, thanks to us! Feel Good Story! (to JOHNSON) No more questions about a Cancer Epidemic!

A nurse enters. She is veiled, and in a burkha..

NURSE
Al salaam a'alaykum.

MAHJUB
A'alaykum al salaam. It is rare to see a woman at work nowadays.

NURSE
This is one of the few jobs we can have.

MAHJUB
(annoyed)
And you must be veiled.

JONES
So, Miss -

NURSE
You have questions about the Cancer Epidemic?

JONES tightens up.

JOHNSON
(excited)
15 years ago - were there any toxic spills?

JONES
Marcus!

JOHNSON
Sorry!

NURSE
No, it wasn't that a spill -

A voice calls from offstage.

VOICE
Doctor! Doctor!

The NURSE turns to exit.

NURSE
I must see about that!

MAHJUB
Can't the doctor handle it?

NURSE
No! We are... short of doctors. Excuse me!

NURSE exits.

MaHJUB
Short of doctors! There's another story!

There is a sound sting that seems to stab JONES in the head.

MAHJUB (CONT'D)
When Saddam was here we had plenty of doctors! He wouldn't let them leave the country. It was wrong, but at least we had health care! Now, the occupation, whoosh! Jordan, Syria, Egypt – wherever they can make money!

DR. KHALIFA re-enters as JOHNSON is taking a picture of something on the floor.

JOHNSON
What is that?

DR. KHALIFA
I'll have someone clean that up...

KHALIFA exits.

JOHNSON
Do not step over there in you good shoes.

MAHJUB
And that woman, that nurse, that's another story!

Another sound sting that seems to JONES' head.

MAHJUB (CONT'D)
She has a job. In some districts women can't even leave the house!
To have a job, for women, sometimes it is a death sentence!

The SWEEPING MAN re-enters, ready to mop the puddle.

JONES
Where's the Doctor?

The SWEEPING MAN pivots, exits.

MAHJUB
Before the war there were women teachers, engineers, even reporters, now, if a woman tries to work, the fundamentalists stone her!

JOHNSON
America must have brought something good to Iraq.

DR. KHALIFA enters.

DR. KHALIFA
Uranium tipped bombs!

Haunting investigative music starts. Again.

JONES
(Exasperated)
Oh, God!

DR. KHALIFA
The Americans used uranium on your artillery shells -

MAHJUB
And dropped them all over this area!

DR. KHALIFA
Some of their soldiers got sick, and they left. Americans call it Gulf War Syndrome -

JONES
(struggling against music)
Feel... good... story..

DR. KHALIFA
But we were saturated! And our children play in radioactive dirt.

VOICE
(a voice calls out) Doctor! Doctor!

DR. KHALIFA leaves.

JOHNSON
What a story!

MAHJUB
"American Bombs Cause Cancer Epidemic!"

JONES
No!

JOHNSON
"In a country without doctors."

JONES
NO! No expose! No! We'll both be sent to a combat unit!

MAHJUB
What kind of reporter are you?

JONES
The kind that wants to stay alive!

NURSE enters.

NIRSE
Sorry, I was... cleaning a shunt.

JOHNSON rushes towards the NURSE, taking her by the arm..

JOHNSON
I have a question about the epidemic-

JONES rushes towards the NURSE, taking her by the other arm..

JONES
What about SpongeBob?

JOHNSON and JONES tug the NURSE back and forth as they argue.

JOHNSON
Cancer!

JONES
Squarepants!

JOHNSON
Tumors!

The NURSE stumbles backwards, losing her veil and burkha, revealing herself to be... DR. KHALIFA and the SWEEPING MAN.

JONES
Dr. Khalifa? What...?

DrR KHALIFA
Don't tell anyone! Please! If the government knew, they would close us down!

JONES
Know what?

JOHNSON
That you're a cross dresser?

DR. KHALIFA
The staff... They all left weeks ago! They didn't want to be killed waiting for the hospital to be built!

JONES
So, you're here by yourself?

DR. KHALIFA
And I am exhausted! It's hard enough being a doctor, but these heels are killing me!

JOHNSON
At your height, I'd go with flats, anyway.

JONES
What are you going to do when the hospital opens?

DR. KHALIFA
Allah willing the others will come back when they see it built.

JOHNSON
Why didn't you leave, too?

DR. KHALIFA
If all the doctors go, who will take care of these children? Hundreds of thousands perhaps millions - and just like you left Agent Orange to infect generations of Vietnamese, this cancer is America's real legacy in Iraq.

DR. KHALIFA exits. JONES looks at JOHNSON.

JONES
Don't even say it!

JOHNSON
I was just going to say I was looking forward to doing a picture essay on a woman risking her life to work in occupied Iraq.

MAHJUB
You really want to know what it's like here for a woman?

MAHJUB takes off beard and disguise, revealing herself to be a woman. JOHNSON and JONES are stunned.

MAHJUB (CONT'D)
Come with me! I have a story to tell you - an exclusive!

MAHJUB exits, JOHNSON starts to follows. He pauses, looking back at JONES.

JOHNSON
I didn't say anything.

JOHNSON exits. JONES is alone as haunting investigative music starts.

JONES exits.

INTERLUDE: A TELEVISION REPORT

The television/dropflap opens, revealing CHENEY speaking.

CHENEY

Many Americans wonder what we're still doing in Iraq. They want to cut and run. Well, I say we cannot leave until the Iraqis have rebuilt the things necessary for modern, civilized life: oil wells, refineries, pipelines! And to those who say we are just interested in planting permanent bases to dominate the region while sucking the last bit of wealth out of a destroyed country, I have ten words: The Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom International Cancer Treatment Hospital, for Children!

CHENEY has counted words off on his fingers, realizes -

CHENEY (CONT'D)

Eleven words!

CHENEY exits, the television flap closes.

SCENE 7

A STREET IN MATHA TUREEDEEN.

JONES enters screaming, his head bursting with the unwanted information MAHJUB is giving he and JOHNSON as they all enter..

MAHJUB
...And so I took my Father's clothes again, but this time I wore a false mustache -

JOHNSON
Now that is embedded!

MAHJUB
And suddenly even the mullahs would answer my questions!

JOHNSON
How long have you been a reporter?

MAHJUB
Since university. I was editor of the school paper - go Crocodiles!

MAHJUB makes roaring sound, snapping her arms together like the jaws of a crocodile . JOHNSON answers with his Warhawk screech, flapping his arms like wings. They do this back and forth a few times. Both are excited, but it's reasonably annoying.

JONES
(at his wits end)
Oh, god!

JOHNSON
How did you become a driver for the Daily Reveille?

MAHJUB
I speak English, I know the city and one day he got into my cab... And how else to get access to so many stories! Some people won't talk to an Iraq reporter - even if she is a man!

JOHNSON
I have got to get a picture of you.

MAHJUB
No –

JONES
Haven't you been listening? She's undercover!

MAHJUB
I'm surprised you heard me, with all your screaming.

JONES
Of course I heard you - you won't shut up!

MAHJUB
At least I am writing stories about what is really going on here!

JOHNSON
I thought you two just did puff pieces.

MAHJUB
He does. I write my own versions.

JONES
What?

MAHJUB
For my online magazine! Whassup Whaziri! While you were writing about Fantasy O'Doul's booty I was doing an article on America's sexualization of war, and how it necessitates the objectification of women!

JOHNSON
Sweet!

JonES
And my story on American soldiers adopting Baghdad's kittens?

MAHJUB
U.S. Ignores Baghdad's orphans!

JONES
President has Thanksgiving feast with Troops?

MAHJUB
While Iraqi grandmothers starve!

JOHNSON
Oooh, she's good!

MAHJUB
And who do you think leaked your Halliburton story to the Times? This is why we are reporters! To tell the stories people need to hear! I was born right after the war with Iran. My father was a soldier, mother was a teacher. They both hated Saddam - he had taken the socialism of the Baath Party and made it into a dictatorship. But both times my father fought against the Americans. Saddam was our problem, not yours! We needed a revolution, instead we got a holocaust. Father never came back from your second invasion. On the internet I can tell the stories of my country - and it breaks my heart! We weren't always like this! This country used to work, people worked. Now millions have fled Iraq, millions more are sick and frightened, our government is useless... and you blame us, and Americans want to leave - leave us with no electricity, empty hospitals, shattered cities, and you blame us! You set fire to our house, and then you curse us for being burned!

JONES
Why don't you just let me write my puff piece about the Hospital - you leak the truth about the cancer.

MAHJUB
My contact with the Times was killed. I can't get the story out. But you can!

JONES
No -

MAHJUB
And it would mean more coming from an American.

JOHNSON
We've got to write this story!

JONES
I can't!

JOHNSON
At the Royal Purple we always said -

JONES
This is not school! Americans don't want the truth! Not the Army, not the government, not the people!

JOHNSON
That night in Whitewater you told me reporters have to tell the truth -

JONES
(desperate)
If any body found out... Don't you want to get back to that bed and breakfast in Madison? The two of us? Well, if any story or leak got traced back to me. We'd both end up in... Sadr City!

MAHJUB
I live in Sadr City! I risk my life everyday for my stories!

JONES
You don't understand –

MAHJUB
I understand! You go on with your feel good stories! Save yourself. And when you get back to the States you can tell yourself you are still a reporter. But you will know the truth!

MAHJUB leaves.

JOHNSON
What are you going to do?

JONES
I'm going to finish the story! One more interview. That's it.

JONES starts out.

JONES (CONT'D)
You coming?

JOHNSON
No... I don't think I... I'll stay out here, get some pictures of the Green Zone.

JONES
Marcus...

JOHNSON
I'll see you back at the office.

JONES leaves.

Song: "MAYBE HE'S RIGHT"

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

MAYBE HE'S RIGHT, AND NO ONE WANTS TO KNOW
ABOUT WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON.
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT, AND NO ONE WANTS TO THINK
ABOUT THE MESS THAT WE'LL BE LEAVING
WHEN WE'RE GONE –

BUT IF WE LIVE IN SILENCE
WE LET THEM RULE WITH FEAR,
SOMETIMES PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THINGS
THEY DON'T WANT TO HEAR!

SOMEONE'S GOT TO SPEAK THE TRUTH,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO FIGHT THE FIGHT,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW,
WHEN EVERYTHING'S NOT ALRIGHT!

I'M SUPPOSED TO TAKE THE FEEL GOOD PICTURES
THAT THE PEOPLE WANT TO SEE.

SMILING CHILDREN, HAPPY FACES,
PLACES THAT AMERICA'S SET FREE.
LOOKING THROUGH MY CAMERA LENS THAT'S NOT
WHO I SEE LOOKING BACK AT ME!
THEY DON'T WANT US HERE, BUT THEY'RE SCARED
OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE LEAVE -

SOMEONE'S GOT TO SPEAK THE TRUTH,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO FIGHT THE FIGHT,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW
EVERYTHING'S NOT ALRIGHT!

SOMEONE'S GOT TO SPEAK THE TRUTH,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO FIGHT THE FIGHT,
SOMEONE'S GOT TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW
EVERYTHING'S NOT ALRIGHT!

JOHNSON exits.

SCENE 8

AN OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

RICE, self-assured and smooth, enters, followed by REPORTERS.

REPORTER 1

Madam Secretary!

REPORTER 2

Madam Secretary! Just a few more -

REPORTER 1

Questions!

RICE

Certainly! Anything for the Press. We can use this office, the Vice-President won't mind. But I only have a few minutes! As I'm sure you know this afternoon I'm flying to London for tea with the Queen, then Rome for a little evening mange with the Pope, then it's Tunisia for late night baba ganoush with Bono.

REPORTER 1

What else can you tell us about the Vice President?

RICE

(irritated)

Why all these questions about him?

REPORTER 2

His hospital in Iraq is almost finished -

REPORTER 1

And with it his popularity keeps going up!

REPORTER 2

It's quite a boost to be seen with him!

RICE

Please - I'm not chasing popularity.

REPORTER 1

Good - 'cuz he just passed you in the polls.

RICE

(stunned)

What?

REPORTER 2

Latest numbers - He's the most loved member of the administration.

RICE

Shut up! Shut up! I mean...oh, really? Well, it's wonderful that the American people have finally realized what a fine man Richard Cheney is, and they've forgotten all... about his involvement with the Enron scandal!

REPORTER 2

Yep. Forgot all about it.

RICE

And... The secret energy council -

REPORTER 1

Totally gone.

RICE

The whole torture thing...

REPORTER 2

Water under the bridge.

RICE

Well, that's very his daughter is a lesbian!

CHENEY enters.

CHENEY

They know.

REPORTERS

Mr. Vice President! A few Questions!

RICE

(trying to regain attention of the REPORTERS)

But... You were asking... Hello....

CHENEY

Not now, boys. Get in line outside, behind Tucker Carlson.

CHENEY pushes REPORTERS out the door.

RICE

I see you found a way to give your numbers a bump.

CHENEY

High enough to knock you out of my chair at Halliburton!

RICE

Really.

CHENEY

I have a meeting with them this afternoon.

RICE

Do you?

CHENEY
Now we'll see who's popular!

RICE
Please! Last week my shoes polled higher than you! And now you have a what - a hospital?

CHENEY
Children's hospital.

RICE
Do you really think it's going to help? You're Dick Cheney! Without your name on that the hospital -

CHENEY
Children's hospital -

RICE
Nobody would be seen with you.

CHENEY
Well my name is on that hospital -

RICE
Children's hospital. Doh!

CHENEY
- And that's makes me loved! That's why Halliburton is going to offer me that job! And there's nothing you and your popular shoes can do about it!

RICE pulls out remote.

RICE
Calm down, Dick. You wouldn't want to have another episode...

RICE pulls out the heart remote.

CHENEY
Condi...

Song: "I'M THE ONE"

RICE

I'M THE ONE WHO PEOPLE LOVE,

I'M THE ONE WHO PEOPLE TRUST,

I'D HOPED IT NEVER WOULD COME TO THIS,

BUT A WOMAN LIKE ME DOES AS SHE MUST!

I'M THE ONE WITH THE INTELLECT,

I'M THE ONE WITH THE WOMAN'S TOUCH,

YOU SHOULD HAVE SHOWN ME SOME RESPECT,

NOW YOU'VE PUSHED ME MUCH TOO MUCH!

RICE(CONT'D)

I told you before, Dick, I'm the most popular member of this Administration! Me! Condoleezza Rice! The most successful ice skating, piano playing security advising Secretary of State this country has ever seen! That's how it's supposed to be!

RICE (CONT'D)

I'VE BEEN BUSY MAKING PLANS,

YOU'VE BEEN OFF IN HIBERNATION.

IN 2012 I'LL BE BACK IN TOWN

WITH MY OWN ADMINISTRATION!

CHENEY

Why you -

CHENEY moves at her, but RICE pushes a button on the heart remote, and CHENEY drops dead. After a moment RICE pushes the button again.

RICE

Live!

CHENEY comes back to life. RICE pushes the button again.

RICE (CONT'D)

Die!

CHENEY drops dead again.

RICE (CONT'D)

Live!

CHENEY comes back to life again. RICE then pushes button a bunch of times, each time with CHENEY either coming back to life or dropping dead again.

RICE (CONT'D)

Die! Live! Die! Live! Die!

With CHENEY dead RICE pauses for a moment, considering, then -

RICE (CONT'D)
Live...

RICE reluctantly pushes the button one more time. CHENEY comes back to life.

CHENEY
(back from the beyond)
It... it was full of stars... What?

RICE
Those poll numbers are mine! That job is mine! And soon, that hospital will be mine!
(RICE starts to exit)
I want you to see this.

RICE pushes button to turn on television, but accidentally CHENEY's heart again. CHENEY drops dead.

RICE (CONT'D)
Darn it...

RICE pushes button to revive CHENEY, then turns on television. RICE exits.

CHENEY
What year is it?

In television dropflap ANCHOR appears, with RICE.

ANCHOR
And there you have it, ladies and gentlemen! Breaking news about the hospital in Matha Tureedeen, Iraq!

RICE
The Administration just felt, and the Vice President agrees, that what is needed for the poor children of Iraq is more than a hospital.

CHENEY
What?

RICE
They need a woman's touch!

CHENEY
(panicked)
Condi!

CHENEY runs off.

RICE
And it's not about pride, it's about compassion, and doing what we can for the suffering people of that village.

ANCHOR

Isn't that the truth!

RICE

And, God willing, soon they'll have 12 floors of cancerous children in the middle of their town.

ANCHOR

So, good-bye Richard B. Cheney Enduring Freedom International Cancer Treatment Hospital, hello... Condoleezza Rice Enduring Freedom International Medical Institute and Cancer Treatment Emporium-

Rice

For Children!

Television shuts off.

INTERLUDE: THE COURTROOM

PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH enter.

PROSECUTOR

But even though you had doubts you still let Jones and Johnson continue with their last interview.

RANDOLPH

The Rebuilding of Iraq is great story Ma'am! 18 billion dollars to get this country out of the stone age we spent 300 billion bombing them into! It's the America way!

PROSECUTOR

And the company rebuilding the hospital?

RANDOLPH

Another feel good story! Newly liberated Iraqi construction firm, partnered with an American administrator. The only way to get these Iraqis back in the game is to get them... back in the game! America may have struck them out last time, but it's a new inning, they're swinging the bat of Liberty, and now we are slow pitching them the Whiffle ball of Freedom!

PROSECUTOR

So they can hit a home run.

RANDOLPH

I'm sorry, Ma'am, I don't follow.

PROSECUTOR

I was just - never mind. Did both Jones and Johnson go to the last interview?

RANDOLPH

No, Ma'am, for some reason only Jones went to meet with the contractors in the Green Zone...

PROSECUTOR and RANDOLPH exit.

SCENE 9

THE CONTRACTORS OFFICE, THE GREEN ZONE

A cell phone is ringing. After a moment an Iraqi man, NAN, enters. He is wearing a mishmash of American and Middle Eastern clothing.

NAN

(he answers phone)

Hello Nan Construction - It's about time you called me back! You wet spot where a camel sat! No, you listen to me! I want you to send those workers back to Sri Lanka! The hospital is finished! We don't need them anymore! Hold on!

A second phone rings. He answers.

NAN (CONT'D)

Nan Construction, a Limited Liability Corporation. Yes, Ambassador! How may I help you? What? Of course! It is no trouble at all!

(first phone)

Hold on...

(second phone)

I understand completely! That sounds much more wonderful!

(first phone)

Get those Sri Lankans back to work! Tear down the hospital!

(second phone)

Of course Ambassador, a little more time, money...

(first phone)

I said hold on!

(second phone)

And please you tell the Madam Secretary for me that we are honored, blessed, and - hello? Hello? Stupid Americans!

(first phone)

Yes, tear it down... again! Because I am paying you! If I have to come down there I will rip off your eyelids and rub sand on you corneas. Alright, get to work! Oh, and when you see her tell Mom I said hello.

NAN hangs up as JONES enters.

JONES

Excuse me -

NAN

Hello, my American friend! How are you?

JONES

Have we met?

NAN

Just now - so our friendship is still fresh!

JONES
I'm Corporal Jones -

NAN
A pleasure!

JONES
And I'm a reporter for the -

NAN
Reporter! Ma atakallam Englisi!

JONES
What?

NAN
I don't speak English.

NAN tries to walk away.

JONES
(quickly pulls out phrase book)
Min fadhlik, "feel good story."

NAN
(clearly relieved)
Welcome to Nan Construction! A limited liability corporation. I am Nan!

The phone rings.

NAN (CONT'D)
Just a moment. (on phone) Nan Construction. What?

NAN rushes to window, looks out.

NAN (CONT'D)
You fool! I told you, Lincoln Navigators, not Ford Explorers! The Explorer is over 14 inches shorter! Go back and buy the Navigators! I don't care what you do with the Explorers-leave them in the desert! Just remember to invoice them all under costs, you wart on a beggar's behind!

NAN slams down phone.

NAN (CONT'D)
Brothers...what are you going to do?

A young, slick-but-casually dressed American, WALTERS, enters.

WALTERS
Nan! I just got a line on some Filipino workers that got abandoned in Kuwait who'll finish building the Hospital just to get their passports back! And we can still invoice for full price!

WALTERS sees JONES, is instantly wary.

WALTERS (CONT'D)
Who the hell is this?

NAN
This is Jones, a reporter...

WALTERS
Did you tell him you don't speak English!

JONES
Don't worry! I'm doing a feel-good story.

WALTERS
Oh, you're one of Randolph's boys! Why didn't you say so? Nan, get us some drinks. Chuck Walters, Project Manager. Nan and I are partnered on this deal.

JONES
You seem kinda young to be in charge of construction-

WALTERS
Don't let the baby face fool you, I worked my way up: three years Junior Republican National Committee Houston! I know what it's like to be in the trenches! And Nan here - what a success story he is! One day he's a pomegranate vendor pulling down a statue, the next he's incorporated! Caught onto our free market system real fast.

WALTERS rubs NAN's head as if NAN were a pet.

WALTERS (CONT'D)
Didn't you, buddy? You know what his favorite part is? Tell him.

NAN
Is it okay...?

WALTERS
Hey, don't worry - we're off the record here, right?

Haunting investigative music starts, irritating JONES..

NAN
Cost plus contracts!

WALTERS
Talk about a feel good story! Thank you, Paul Bremer!

NAN
Everything we do is part of the costs! You name it, it goes in the budget!

WALTERS
And we still get our fee on top of whatever we invoice for!

Haunting investigative music grows louder, as JONES tries to ignore it.

WALTERS (CONT'D)
Reminds me, did you get the Navigators straightened out?

NAN
They shipped the Explorers.

JONES
(trying to stay on assignment)
How... much.... was it to build the clinic?

NAN
The clinic? 10 million.

WALTERS
Hospital 15.

NAN
Emporium 25.

Haunting investigative music grows louder, as JONES struggles.

WALTERS
Gosh darn it, Nan! This Coke is warm!

NAN
They just flew them in from Houston! $4 a can!

JONES
And you tore it down three times -

WALTERS
Between you and me we're charging $10 mil each time we have to deconstruct the thing! And we just heard Congress is gonna top out at 50!

Haunting investigative music is popping JONES' head.

JONES
Hundreds of thousands of kids, millions we made sick with our bombs, then we tear down the clinic they had to replace it with nothing but propaganda!

NAN
Don't worry soon there'll be some good contracts for the rebuilding of Teheran.

JONES
(struggling mightily against himself)
No investigations... no exposes...no!

WALTERS
Hey! I know what you want to know!

WALTERS AND NAN
(*singing*)

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

Spongebob Squarepants!

WALTERS
We got a great deal on some wallpaper - Plus a 300% mark up for shipping -

JONES
You don't have enough money to finish! You're 30 million short!

NAN and WALTERS pause, then start to laugh.

WALTERS
At least! After lunch we'll take you down to that construction site... or destruction site, or whatever. Maybe we can root around, find a sick kid to talk to! Remember -

WALTERS AND NAN
Feel Good Story!

WALTERS and NAN start to go, but JONES is writhing in anguish. Finally the, with a triumphant fanfare, JONES' reporter souls wins the battle.

JONES
No...no...no! I can't do it!

NAN
Can't do what?

JONES
I... can't write another puff piece!

WALTERS
What are you talking about?

JONES
I don't care if they send me back to Sadr City, people have got to know the truth!

WALTERS
Who do you think you are?

JONES
(heroically)
I'm... Emiliano Jones! Investigative Reporter!

JONES exits.

NAN
This could be a problem.

WALTERS
Come on, I gotta make a phone call...

NAN and WALTERS exit.

INTERLUDE: COURTROOM

RANDOLPH enters, addresses the court.

RANDOLPH

Yes, your Honor, by then everybody in the States felt good about the hospital story. And suddenly stories about other feel good construction projects started to roll in from all over Iraq! The Alberto Gonzales School of Law in Tirkit! The Karl Rove College of Political Ethics in Fallujah! The George W. Bush Prison for the Criminally Insane and Daycare Center in Baghdad! Finally it was clear to America exactly how much Iraq had benefitted from the War. And if had been safe to walk the streets, even the Iraqis would see the wonderful future we're building for them!

RANDOLPH exits.

SCENE 10

COLONEL RANDOLPH'S OFFICE

JOHNSON and MAHJUB enter.

JOHNSON
Why not just put the story on the net?

MAHJUB
Because unless they google Iraqi, and uranium, and cancer people would never find it!

JOHNSON
I don't know, American's spend alot of time online.

MAHJUB
And if the internet is so informative, why are you all so stupid? If only it were pornography - then you would know all about it!

MAHJUB starts to go.

MAHJUB (CONT'D)
Now that Jones knows I'm a reporter he won't let me continue here. It is too dangerous for him. Here -

MAHJUB hands JOHNSON her tape recorder.
Goodbye.

MAHJUB exits.

JOHNSON
Well, that sucks.

RANDOLPH enters.

RaNDOLPH
Corporal Johnson!

JOHNSON snaps to attention.

JOHNSON
Sir!

RANDOLPH
Good news! Guess who's interviewing during his next leave - with Fox?

RANDOLPH indicates himself.

JOHNSON
A TV show?

RANDOLPH

Right between O'Reilly, Hannity, and Coombs! I'll be doing in depth commentary on the terrorist threat to America! It's called "Colonel...of Truth!" (dramatic fanfare)

JOHNSON

Great.

RANDOLPH

You don't seem very excited, Corporal. Wait! They just sent me a tape! Wait 'till you hear it! That'll cheer you up!

RANDOLPH exits. JONES enters from another direction.

JonES

Marcus! There you are! You won't believe the stuff I got!

JONES hands notebook to JOHNSON, who reads it.

JOHNSON

You finished your last interview?

JONES

And it was amazing! But first, I want to tell you, about what you said before -

JOHNSON

I've been doing some thinking, too. And I realize - you were right! We can't turn this story in!

JONES

What? But -

JOHNSON

There'll be other stories, important stories, we can do together back home!

JONES

But I thought this was what you wanted - to tell the truth. I thought you wanted me to be -

JOHNSON

Alive! I want us both to be alive!

RANDOLPH enters.

RANDOLPH

Listen to this!

RANDOLPH puts tape in the tape player JOHNSON is holding, hits play. There is an over blown musical intro.

BOMBASTIC VOICE

"COLONEL OF TRUTH! WITH COLONEL WILLIAM RANDOLPH!"

JOHNSON shuts off tape player.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
Now if that isn't a touchdown I don't know what is! What are you two talking about?

JOHNSON
Nothing! Just finishing another feel good story -

JONES takes back notebook.

JONES
We can't put our happiness before the story!

JOHNSON grabs notebook back.

JOHNSON
I can! Give me that!

JONES (CONT'D)
Marcus!

JOHNSON
I'll never let this story out!

PROSECUTOR enters.

PROSECUTOR
Then what did Johnson do?

RANDOLPH
He ran out of the office!

JOHNSON runs out.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
And Jones ran after him!

JONES runs out.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
Yelling about a notebook!

JONES re-enters, re-exits.

JONES
My notebook!

RANDOLPH
Then there was a scream!

JOHNSON'S Warhawk squawk.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
An explosion!

Offstage explosion.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
And that was the last time I saw Corporal Johnson alive!

PROSECUTOR
But we never found a body -

RANDOLPH
Before we could search the area there was an insurgent attack. We figured they dragged him away. We found some tracks.

PROSECUTOR
But how do you know Jones murdered him?

RANDOLPH
Because... he confessed it to me!

JONES enters.

JONES
(bitterly)
I killed him!

RANDOLPH
(shocked)
You killed Corporal Johnson?

JONES
Yes!

JONES shifts from being in RANDOLPH's testimony to himself addressing the court.

JONES (CONT'D)
No, no! Colonel Randolph is lying! This isn't how it happened!

PrOSECUTOR
Could your Honor instruct the defendant - (pause as judge speaks) but - (pause as judge speaks) Yes, I done with my - (pause as judge speaks) fine. Col. Randolph, you may step down. Corporal Jones, you may proceed with your defense.

JONES
Well, I did come back to the office that night, but not like the Colonel said -

JOHNSON re-enters, as scene is replayed in JONES' testimony.

JONES(CONT'D)
Marcus! There you are! You won't believe the stuff I got!

JONES hands notebook to JOHNSON, who reads it.

JOHNSON
You finished your last interview?

JONES
And it was amazing! But first, I want to tell you, about what you said before -

JOHNSON
I've been doing some thinking, too. And I realize - you were right! We can't turn this story in!

JONES
What? But -

JOHNSON
We can't... but I can! I don't care if it means combat, jail time, whatever! And don't worry, I won't tell anyone you were involved.

JOHNSON begins to leave.

JONES
But, Marcus, that's what I wanted to tell you! I was doing the interview, and suddenly I... I felt that...

JONES sings to the tune of "BE A LION" from "The Wiz."

JONES (CONT'D)

I was standing strong and tall...

The tune hangs in the air for a moment until JOHNSON, recognizes the lyrics, stops. He turns.

JOHNSON

...The bravest of them all?

JONES

If on courage you must call,

JOHNSON

KEEP ON TRYIN', AND TRYIN', AND TRYIN' –

JONES
(proudly)

I'M A LION!

JOHNSON
(thrilled beyond belief)
The Wiz!

JONES
I've decided to release this story under my own byline!

RANDOLPH enters, as before.

RANDOLPH
Listen to this!

RANDOLPH puts tape in the tape player JOHNSON is holding, hits play. There is an over blown musical intro.

BOMBASTIC VOICE
"COLONEL OF TRUTH! WITH COLONEL WILLIAM RANDOLPH!"

JOHNSON shuts off tape player.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
If that isn't a touch down I don't know what is! What are you two talking about?

JONES
A story, sir. A big one! "America uses propaganda to cover massive war crime!" And there's no feel good about it, except the feeling of telling the truth!

JOHNSON
That's the man I love!

RANDOLPH
Are you crazy? That'll ruin everything! Your future! My future!

JONES
Come on, Colonel! You're a newspaper man, too! Don't you want to break a big story?

RANDOLPH
What I want is Prime Time and good ratings! You can't do this to me! You leak that story to anyone I'll send you both to... Sadr City!

JONES
Go ahead! One of the best reporters I know lives there. In fact, she's going to help us write it!

JONES takes JOHNSON's hand.

JONES (CONT'D)
Come on, honey.

JOHNSON exits. JONES addresses the court.

JONES
We get outside, next thing I know there's a grenade. Marcus pushed me aside, and that was it.

PROSECUTOR

Oh, so you'd have us believe someone else threw that grenade? Who are you going to blame? Perhaps it was the soldiers - they certainly didn't like Johnson. Dr. Khalifa? Your article could close his hospital. Maybe it was the contractors, the men rebuilding Iraq? Or maybe -

Suddenly, at the door of the court, JOHNSON appears, on crutches.

JOHNSON

It was Randolph!

JONES

Marcus!

JOHNSON gives mighty Warhawk shriek.

RANDOLPH

It can't be!

JOHNSON

You wanted to stop the story!

RANDOLPH

It wasn't me!

JOHNSON

You threw the grenade!

RANDOLPH

He's lying!

JONES

All you wanted was prime time, and good ratings!

RANDOLPH

No!

PROSECUTOR

And you were willing to kill to get them!

RANDOLPH

No! Alright! I did it! I needed to stop you, both of you! I finally had my chance to be an on air war commentator! All I wanted was a feel good story of my own! And I would have had it, if it hadn't been for you meddling homosexuals!

PROSECUTOR

Colonel Randolph, you are under arrest for attempted murder!

RANDOLPH

No!

PROSECUTOR

Murder!

RANDOLPH

No!

PROSECUTOR

MUUURRDEEEER!

RANDOLPH

But I didn't do it just for the ratings, I did it -

RANDOLPH turns to audience as if they are the court members.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)

For you! I was just giving the people what they want! And without propaganda, what would you all have? And if you really knew what was being done over here in your name, you'd never invade another country - and that would be unAmerican!

RANDOLPH solemnly salutes.

Remember 9/11!

PROSECUTOR leads RANDOLPH out.

JONES

Marcus, how...?

JOHNSON

After the explosion someone did drag me away - Mahjub! She took me back to her house.

JONES

Why?

JOHNSON

She saw Randolph throw the grenade, and figured I was safer with her. I'm sorry I took so long to get better.

JONES

You were right on time!

The television snaps on, and the ANCHOR appears.

ANCHOR

Sad news today from the plucky village of Matha Tureedeen. Locals cried in their kufiyas, and boo-hood in their burkahs as it was announced that, due to increased terrorist attacks, the Condoleezza Rice Cancer Emporium will never be completed. The hospital, and all the good feelings it brought to us here at home, are gone forever.

JOHNSON

(to JONES)

Guess we'll get kicked out of the Army

JONES

Ya think? We're gay, we disobeyed orders, we're gay, we leaked a story, gay, and we uncovered America infecting a whole country with cancer!

JOHNSON

And we're gay.

ANCHOR

Making the announcement Secretary Rice was clearly saddened, while at her side Vice President Cheney appeared to chuckle, then dropped dead for five minutes. But America, get ready to feel good all over again! Because next week construction begins on the new $170 million dollar George and Laura Bush Cancer Treatment Hospital in Basra! It's another glorious gesture of what America is doing over there for... the children!

JOHNSON

Oh well, goodbye Army.

JONES takes JOHNSON in his arms.

JONES

Hello, Wisconsin!

JONES and JOHNSON kiss.

End of play

Red State

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan

Music and Lyrics by
Pat Moran

Poster by Spain Rodriguez

There was a time when Prairie Progressives were a thing. Farmer and small-town factory worker solidarity against Wall Street and the owner class was the normal reaction to repossessed farms and layoffs. Class consciousness ruled the prairies.

Kansas used to be the other kind of Red.

Those days are long gone.

But what if…

What if a small dying town found itself with the chance to make a difference for itself? What if it was suddenly at the center of national attention, with just enough leverage to get the sidewalks fixed? Can people who have come to believe that only weaklings want "entitlements" change? If only Commies expect that the hard-earned common wealth of the working class should actually benefit the working class what are you if you agree? In this Capra-esque tale of the town of Bluebird, Kansas the question is: what is a "Red State?"

"Combines red and blue, truth and unreality, political commentary and incisive wit, with the skill of a master chef. The results are delicious. "Red State" is ideal election year fare — sharp and funny, with just enough bite."
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

"Reclaiming red from the dusty color wheel of history - smart and consistently funny script - brilliantly delivered by a uniformly sharp and charismatic cast - posits FDR's small town America as marooned at Francis Fukuyama's end of history.."
SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Doris
Eugene
Betty
Faustina Page
Wendell
Tommy
Mayor
Sophie
Rosa
Mrs. McAlester
Technician
Reporters-
    Muffy Von Braun
    Cliff Windswept
    Kwame Yamaguchi
    Ricardo Suave
    Steffi Klugsheisser
Host
Steward
Stewardess
Announcer
Truck Driver
Various workers

RED STATE opened July 4th, 2008, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California. The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan, with the following cast:

Doris, Host, Stewardess, Kwame Yamaguchi……	Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Eugene, Truck Driver	Robert Ernst*
Betty, Ms. McAlester, Technician, Cliff Windswept	Lizzie Calegero*
Faustina Page, Sophie, Rosa, Muffy Von Braun	Velina Brown*
Wendell, Mayor, Steffi Klugsheisser	Noah Butler*
Tommy, Ricardo Suave, Steward	Adrian Mejia

*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

MAIN STREET, BLUEBIRD KANSAS

A loud mechanical sound – like a the gears of an enormous clock – and over the empty main street a bright, yellow, smily-faced Sun slowly rises. The sound and the Sun give the feeling of giant clock, or that this is all taking place in an old machine. When the Sun reaches it's apex the sound of the gears stops and there is a loud "DING."

The set indicates the crumbling facades and closed businesses of a once mildly prosperous but now struggling town.

A cheerful, young, working-class woman, DORIS, enters. She carries a baby in a sling, a toddler in a stroller, and she is pushing in a wheeled table which has a large "VOTE TODAY" banner" and is draped with an American Flag. DORIS parks the stroller, and finds what she thinks is just the right spot for the table.

Song: "BLUEBIRD"

DORIS
(proudly)

THERE'S A TOWN IN THE HEART OF THIS NATION,

WHERE THE PEOPLE STAND STRONG, BRAVE,

AND FREE,

AND IT GOES BY THE NAME OF BLUEBIRD,

YES, IT GOES BY THE NAME OF B-L-U-E-B-I-R-D!

DORIS exits, and returns with a stack of pamphlets, which she puts on the table.

LET'S GIVE A CHEER FOR OLD BLUEBIRD,

THE FINEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE LAND

Baby cries. DORIS comforts him, sings a bit softer.

DORIS(cont'd)

AND ALTHOUGH WE MAY BE FEW,

WE WILL ALWAYS HOLD TRUE,

FOR UNITED TOGETHER WE STAND!

DORIS' cellphone rings. She answers it.

DORIS(cont'd)
Hello? Thanks for calling back. This here is Doris Bradley down in Bluebird. I been callin' all day, and ... Bluebird Kansas, and listen, it's almost 6 o'clock! I don't mean to make a fuss, but it's election day, but we still don't have a voting machine. Don't you put me on hold again! Don't! Don't! Well, if that don't burn my muffins!

EUGENE, a middle aged, working-class man, enters, tripping on a crack in the sidewalk.

EUGENE
Gosh darn it! One of these days somebody's like t' break their ankle we don't get that sidewalk fixed!

DORIS
Hey, Eugene! Machine ain't here yet, but once it is we're gonna be votin' like a house a fire!

EUGENE
I can't wait long. You headin' up to the big auction? Figured I'd see if I can get what fer this harmonica. Pawn shop said twenty-five, but thems outta town suckers! Might fetch a hundred!

BETTY, an older working-class woman, enters, tripping on the sidewalk. She walks with the gait of someone with a sore back, and is carrying a wooden cradle.

BETTY
Darn that thing! Why can't the town fix nothin'?

EUGENE
Evenin' Betty! Hey, ain't that little Dalton's cradle?

BETTY
Yep.

EUGENE
You takin' it up t' the auction?

BETTY
Yep.

DORIS
Where's Dalton gonna sleep?

BETTY
My daughter got kicked outta her trailer, so they're movin' into the Oldsmobile, with the rest of us. I gotta go -

DORIS
Machine's gonna be here any minute!

BETTY hurries off. On another part of the stage, in an office In Topeka, FAUSTINA PAGE enters, on phone. FAUSTINA, 40's, is more sharply dressed than one would assume for her position, and with the condescending attitude of a Big City person assigned to a post in the "sticks."

FAUSTINA
(on phone, to DORIS)
This is Faustina Page, how can I help you?

DORIS
Don't you put me on hold again! I need to talk to a supervisor, or some such body!

FAUSTINA
I'm assistant sub-secretary to the junior under-supervisor for Nebraska..

DORIS
Kansas!

FAUSTINA
Whichever.

EUGENE
(to DORIS)
I'll see you later...

DORIS
(to EUGENE) Hold on! *(to FAUSTINA)* We still don't have no voting machines down here!

FAUSTINA
We is who, and down here is where?

DORIS
We is us, and down here is Bluebird!

FAUSTINA
I'm sorry, but we only deal with issues in Nebraska -

DORIS
Kansas!

FAUSTINA
Whichever.

WENDELL, a young working-class man enters, dragging a wooden crucifix a little larger than himself. WENDELL also trips on the sidewalk.

WENDELL
Eugene! Wait for me!

FAUSTINA
Let me check the computers –

Bob Ernst at EUGENE, Lisa Hori Garcia as DORIS

Noah Butler as WENDELL

Velina Brown as FAUSTINA, Bob Ernst as EUGENE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as DORIS
Photos by Rog Franklin

FAUSTINA exits.

EUGENE
Wendell! What are you doin' with that?

WENDELL
He's gotta be worth something! My uncle saved Jesus from some cathedral in W.W. 2!

EUGENE
Come on!

DORIS
Can't ya'll wait?

EUGENE
Rent's due today. Sorry, Doris!

EUGENE exits.

WENDELL
Sorry, Jesus.

WENDELL exits.

DORIS
Please...!

In her office FAUSTINA re-enters.

FAUSTINA
According to the database you were supposed to receive a Votatron 3000.

DORIS
But it ain't here!

FAUSTINA
Well, I don't know what to say - It should have arrived first thing this morning.

DORIS
You sure you sent it to the right place? Out the old interstate -

FAUSTINA
Past the open pit mine -

DORIS
Left at the abandoned airplane factory -

FAUSTINA
Right at the abandoned mill -

DORIS
Past the abandoned tire factory -

FAUSTINA
Right at the old slaughterhouse -

DORIS
And that should bring you right into-

A TECHNICIAN enters into DORIS' part of the stage with a voting machine. (Note: The TECHNICIAN never speak, but when the moment is right expresses himself physically.)

DORIS(cont'd)
Where have you been? I been waitin' all day! Put that machine down there.

TECHNICIAN tries to obey, but is clearly having a hard time separating himself from voting machine. He seems to be in love with it, and the separation is heartbreaking.

DORIS(cont'd)
(hands back receipt)
Here ya go!

TECHNICIAN sadly leaves.

DORIS(cont'd)
It's finally here.

FAUSTINA
Well, if there isn't anything else I have a plane to catch to the East Coast...

DORIS
Ain't ya gonna stick around for the results?

FAUSTINA
Don't get me wrong - I want to make sure every citizen here in Nebraska-

DORIS
Kansas -

FAUSTINA
-gets to vote, but I also have an important meeting tomorrow in Washington -

DORIS
D...C.?

FAUSTINA
(condescendingly)
Yes... that's the one.

DORIS
Some big guv'ment thing, I betcha!

FAUSTINA
As a matter of fact, a job interview with the Federal Election Committee!

DORIS

Wow!

FAUSTINA

Assistant Under Secretary of Regional Oversight! What I wouldn't give for my own office... in Washington! So I can't miss my flight! But don't worry - now that your Votatron has arrived everything will be fine, and I'm sure the election will go perfectly for the citizens of Bluebird -

BOTH

Kansas!

DORIS

Have a nice trip!

FAUSTINA

Bye!

They hang up. FAUSTINA exits.

DORIS

Finally!

Unseen by DORIS a young, uniformed soldier, TOMMY, has entered, tripping on the sidewalk. DORIS' toddler cries.

TOMMY

Looks like yer all ready!

DORIS

Well, I been waitin' all day for this darn thing, and –

As she recognizes the voice DORIS turns and sees TOMMY

DORIS(cont'd)

Tommy? Tommy! Is that you? Yer back!

DORIS rushes to TOMMY, giving him a big hug.

TOMMY

Hey there, Doris!

DORIS

(hopefully)

Is my John...?

TOMMY

I'm sorry. Guess the Army still needs him.

DORIS

Oh, well. He'll be back soon. But look at you! My little brother - all growed up - musta been pretty excitin'! Fightin' them Taliban -

TOMMY
I just want to settle back in. All that time, on the other side of the world, all I thought about was Main Street, right here in Bluebird. The Elementary, the Post Office, the Mayor servin' up drinks in the Touchdown Bar -

Toddler and baby cry.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Guess you can't spend much time with the kids, working at the factory.

DORIS
Well, I took today off to work the pollin' station, but we get time most morning while I drive Daisy over to Covington.

TOMMY
Why do you take her to Covington?

DORIS
County closed the nursery school in Bluebird. Not enough kids no more.

TOMMY
But that's an hour away!

DORIS
Doctor Phil, on TV? He calls that quality time.

TOMMY
Hey, I'm gonna go see if'n I can find some folks - try and rustle up a comin' home party! Why-oncha come along?

DORIS
What about the election?

TOMMY
(indicating voting machine)
We'll bring that thing along! Maybe we'll have a Voting Party, too!

DORIS
Well, alright! Sounds excitin'!

Reprise: "BLUEBIRD"

TOMMY

THERE ARE SOME WHO MAY LIVE

LIVES OF SORROW,

BUT I KNOW THAT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME,

FOR I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN OLD BLUEBIRD

YES I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN -

TOMMY & DORIS

B-L-U-E-B-I-R-D

LET'S GIVE A CHEER FOR OLD BLUEBIRD,

THE FINEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE LAND!

AND ALTHOUGH WE MAY BE FEW

WE WILL ALWAYS BE TRUE

FOR UNITED TOGETHER WE STAND!

TOMMY and DORIS pick up the voting machine, table, flag, and exit.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as DORIS, Adrian Mejia as TOMMY Photo by Rog Franklin

SCENE 2

IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BLUEBIRD, KANSAS.

EUGENE enters, followed by WENDELL, who is slowly dragging the giant crucifix.

EUGENE
Come on, Wendell!

WENDELL
Jesus is heavy! Fer a skinny fella the Lord sure weighs alot! And all yer carryin' is that...Hey, ain't that yer Daddy's harmonica?

EUGENE
It sure is...

WENDELL
Looks pretty fancy!

EUGENE
The union presented it to him after 20 years in the pencil factory.

WENDELL
It's engraved.

WENDELL tries to read it. EUGENE knows it by heart.

EUGENE
It says, "A hero to the workers is a hero to us all."

EUGENE plays a little.

WENDELL
That was right before the booted him... for bein' a Red.

Sound sting! EUGENE reacts as if a painful electric jolt has gone through him.

EUGENE
(strangely angry)
I ain't no Red!

WENDELL
I didn't say you were!

EUGENE looks with disdain at his Father's harmonica in his hand.

EUGENE
That's why I'm selling it! This is the last part of my pinko Dad I still have.

EUGENE plays his harmonica.

WENDELL
Hey, you figure he left you because he was a Red?

Another stabbing sting, and again EUGEN is jolted. (This is going to happen throughout the show, each time EUGENE thinks/ feels about his "red" parents.

EUGENE
(angry again)
I ain't no Red!

WENDELL
I didn't say that you were! Jesus Christ! (to the crucifix) Ooh, sorry Jesus.

ANNOUNCER VOICE
Ladies and Gentlemen!

EUGENE
Sounds like they're startin"! Come on!

EUGENE and WENDELL rush off..

ANNOUNCER VOICE
Today is November 4th, 2008. We all know what that means - It's when Americans exercise the greatest of their Freedoms, and share the deepest of their hopes! When we all stand together - Red state, Blue state, black and white, young and old. It's the day we've all been waiting for! That's right, it's...

A well-dressed, smiling man with an urbane style and accent, the HOST, enters.

HOST
The Antiques Roadshow Election Day Special! Welcome! We are broadcasting live from the Public Library in Bluebird, Kansas!

BETTY briskly enters, carrying her cradle.

HOST (cont'd)
Because it's here in America's heartland we find the most cherished Americana, and where we find people anxious to find out exactly what their precious memories are worth!

BETTY
(to HOST)
Excuse me -

HOST
Our first appraisal! A cradle!

BETTY
Got it from my grandma...

HOST
(smiling at the camera)
It looks very old!

BETTY cradles the cradle.

BETTY
She brought it with her from Lithuania...handed it down to momma for me, now my grandbaby sleeps in it...

HOST
It's beautiful.

BETTY
It means the world to us...

BETTY suddenly, dramatically shifts from her touching memories to economic desperation

Song: "HOW MUCH"

BETTY (cont'd)

SO HOW MUCH CAN YOU GIVE ME?

HOW MUCH CAN YOU PAY?

WHAT'S THE USE OF HOLDIN' ON TO MEMORIES

WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE ENOUGH TO

MAKE IT THROUGH THE DAY?

USED TO HAVE A LITTLE BIT OF MONEY SAVED UP

BUT I GONE AND DRAINED IT DRY

I TURNED 65 SEVERAL YEARS AGO

BUT I'LL BE WORKING TILL THE DAY I DIE!

WENDELL enters with large bleeding Jesus on a cross. WENDELL and BETTY jostle to be first.

WENDELL
(to HOST)
Hey, mister -

BETTY
No you don't! I was here first!

WENDELL
What'll ya give me for Jesus?

BETTY
Offer me one seventy-five!

HOST
I'm sorry, but we don't actually buy -

WENDELL
Lost a finger pullin' it down... not Jesus! My uncle! Jesus is just fine! Kept him in the barn... 'till the bank took our place...

WENDELL (cont'd)

USED TO HAVE A FARM

A COUPLE MILES FROM TOWN,

PASSED DOWN FROM MY DADDY TO ME.

BUT A MAN CAN'T MAKE A LIVIN'

OFF THE LAND NO MORE,

SO I GOT ME A JOB DOWN AT THE FACTORY.

BETTY AND WENDELL

EVERYDAY THE PRICE OF LIVIN' KEEPS RISIN' UP,

I'M SPENDIN' MORE THAN I CAN MAKE.

I'M OVER MY HEAD, HANGIN' ON BY A THREAD

HOPIN' THAT THE ROPE DON'T BREAK,

LORD, LORD –

HOPIN' THAT THE ROPE DON'T BREAK!

WENDELL
(to HOST, about crucifix)
His eyes... they follow you around the room –

BETTY
I was here first!

SOPHIA, a working class woman in coveralls enters, with a oxygen tank. Sings.

SOPHIE

WAKE UP EVERY MORNING

WHEN THE SUN'S STILL IN BED,

TAKE MY PLACE IN THE ASSEMBLY LINE.

I'M WORKING DOUBLE SHIFTS, GETTIN NO BENEFITS

DON'T KNOW HOW I KEEP FROM CRYIN',

LORD, LORD –

I DON'T KNOW HOW I KEEP FROM CRYIN'

SOPHIE (cont'd)
I got this from when they tore up the hospital –

EUGENE hurriedly enters.

EUGENE
I hope I aint' too late! I got, hold on - now this here gold plated harmonica -

BETTY
I was here first! Offer me one fifty!

HOST
I told you, we don't buy -

BETTY, WENDELL, SOPHIE
(desperately)

SO, HOW MUCH CAN YOU GIVE ME?

FOR AN ITEM THIS OLD AND RARE?

I'M SURE A BIG CELEBRITY HOST LIKE YOU

HAS GOT A LITTLE CASH

HE CAN AFFORD TO SPARE?

HOW MUCH CAN YOU GIVE ME?

HOW MUCH CAN YOU PAY?

WHAT'S THE USE OF HOLDIN' ON TO MEMORIES

WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE ENOUGH

TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE DAY?

HOW MUCH -

Suddenly the HOST drops his urbane persona. He's from Brooklyn.

HOST
Look! I told you we don't buy anything! You want to know what your junk is worth, the appraisers are over there! Now move it! I have a show to do!

As the HOST composes himself BETTY, WENDELL, SOPHE, and EUGENE rush off.

WENDELL
Hey! You! What'll you give me for this!

BETTY
I was here first!

ANNOUNCER VOICE
Funding for Antiques Road show is provided by The Ford Foundation, the Chevron Foundation, the Archer Daniels Midland Foundation, the U.S. Navy Foundation, the Government of Dubai Foundation, and of course, viewers like you.

HOST
(as his urbane self)
And we're back! While our new friends are having their beloved heirlooms appraised, here's a little known fact for you at home: did you know that Bluebird, Kansas is the #2 pencil capital of North Central Kansas? It's true!

The MAYOR, a smiling civic booster with a ready handshake, and ROSA, a cleanly dressed middle-aged woman enter.

HOST *(cont'd)*
Now, let's see what other treasures we can find in this charming town! Well goodness me! Ladies and gentlemen, this is Robert R. Roberts, Mayor of Bluebird!

The MAYOR grabs the HOST's hand with the mic, pulls it to himself.

MAYOR
Mayor of the best little slice of happiness in the whole U.S. of A!

HOST pulls the mic back.

HOST
And -

The MAYOR pulls the mic to himself again.

MAYOR
As American as apple pie -

HOST pulls the mic back.

HOST
And -

The MAYOR pulls the mic to himself again

Velina Brown as SOPHIE, Bob Ernst as EUGENE, Adrian Mejia as TOWNIE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as HOST, Lizzie, Calogero as BETTY Photo by Rog Franklin

MAYOR

Twice as sweet!

HOST pulls the mic back.

HOST

And who is this with you?

The MAYOR pulls the mic to himself again

MAYOR

Miss Rosa, our librarian for thirty three years!

HOST pulls the mic back.

HOST

Let's talk to the caretaker of this wonderful institution!

MAYOR reaches for mic again, but HOST slaps MAYOR's hand away. ROSA present the room to the tv viewers.

ROSA

Bluebird Public library... built in 1937, part of Roosevelt's New Deal bringing jobs and literacy to this part of the country. Whole generations of Bluebirders grew up on these books...

HOST

Well, they certainly are a treasure.

ROSA

Yes, they are. (pause) What do you think we can get for them?

MAYOR

Rosa!

The MAYOR, worried ROSA's comment will reflect badly on the town, reaches for mic, HOST again slaps the MAYOR away.

HOST

(to ROSA)

You're selling the books?

ROSA

The Governor says they can't afford to keep the Library open!

Panicked to sound positive, the MAYOR grabs mic completely out of the HOSTS's hand, runs..

MAYOR

Hey, does your TV audience know that Bluebird has the lowest commercial tax in the state of Kansas? Great place to start a business!

HOST

Give me that!

MAYOR exits with the HOST'S mic, the HOST chases after him. EUGENE enters, speaking to someone offstage..

EUGENE
Ah, yer loco! This here harmonica is worth at least –

EUGENE turns and sees ROSA.

Bob Ernst as EUGENE, Velina Brown as MISS ROSA
Photo by Rog Franklin

EUGENE(cont'd)
Oh! Miss Rosa...

ROSA
Mr. Salinski...

There is clearly some unspoken love between the two. But something keeps them apart...

EUGENE
You look very nice this afternoon....

ROSA
Well, I don't feel very nice... considering the State is closing down the Library!

EUGENE
Closin' the liberry?

ROSA
No, closing. With a "G" at the end - closing. First the Post Office, then the High School, the hospital -

EUGENE
I been tellin' you for years, Miss Rosa, get a job in the factory!

Their passion for each other is overtaken by their political differences.

ROSA
(indignant)
Mr. Salinski, I am a public servant -

EUGENE
(dismissively)
You can't rely on the government –

ROSA
Government is the collective will of the people!

EUGENE
All they do is waste our tax dollars!

The argument becomes heated.

ROSA
Public spending is what made this country great!

EUGENE
That's socialism!

ROSA
It's the American way!

EUGENE

In Cuba!

ROSA

Eugene!

EUGENE

Rosa!

ROSA & EUGENE

I –

The MAYOR runs on with mic, chased by the HOST.

MAYOR

Hey! Did you folks know that Bluebird is the #2 pencil capital of North Central Kansas?

HOST

I already told them!

MAYOR and HOST exit. MAYOR pops his head back in.

MAYOR

Great place to start a business!

The MAYOR is pulled offstage, and there is the sound of the HOST slapping the MAYOR.

MAYOR (cont'd)
(offstage)

Ow!

EUGENE

This harmonica was my Dad's...

HOST enters, with mic.

HOST

A family treasure.

EUGENE

My dad gave it to me right before he left Bluebird...

HOST

It's beautiful. Your Father must have loved you very much.

EUGENE

Well, he -

Music sting, EUGENE jolt.

EUGENE(cont'd)
(angrily)
I ain't no Red!

HOST
I didn't say you were!

EUGENE
(stabbing harmonica out to HOST)
Just tell me what it's worth.

HOST
Well, it's so personal-

EUGENE
Are we talking a hundred? I'll take fifty.

MRS. McALESTER, a very well-dressed, middle-aged woman enters.

MRS. MCALESTER
I have something I'd like to have appraised.

ROSA
Mrs. McAlester!

HOST
Who?

EUGENE
McAlester Pencil factory! Half the town works for her.

ROSA
(ruefully)
The half that still work.

MRS. MCALESTER
First let me just say how much I enjoy your show. Seeing all the little people, selling their prized possessions...

HOST
A fan! How wonderful! And what would you like us to appraise?

MRS. MCALESTER
My factory.

EUGENE
What?

MRS. MCALESTER
Well, it is an antique. Built in 1917. Beautiful old building. Or you could just knock it down and use the land.

EUGENE
She ain't sellin'! It's a joke!

MRS. MCALESTER
It's just too expensive to make pencils here anymore.

EUGENE
Even them stubby golf pencils?

MRS. MCALESTER
With all these taxes and regulations I just can't compete. So tonight I'll be flying off to Uzbekistan - there's an old Soviet poison gas factory that's up for remodeling. No regulations, no taxes, and lots of little non-union Uzbeks dying for work.

EUGENE
You can't!

MRS. MCALESTER
As of today I'm shutting down the factory in Bluebird!

EUGENE
But -

MrS. MCALESTER
Oh, and sorry about the pensions.

A shock of concern goes through the room.

EUGENE
Pensions?

MRS. MCALESTER leads the HOST out.

MRS. MCALESTER
This way. (to the others) Goodbye little people, and good luck selling your memories!

MRS. MCALESTER and the HOST exit.

ROSA
Well, I have quite a few books to pack up.

EUGENE
Would you like some help... Miss Rosa...?

ROSA
No thank you, Mr. Salinski.

She exits. EUGENE looks at his harmonica, plays a few bars. He looks at the harmonica again, and evidently feels some memory of his parents because there is...

Music sting, EUGENE jolt.

EUGENE exits.

SCENE 3

A RUN-DOWN, WORKING CLASS SALOON IN BLUEBIRD -
THE TOUCHDOWN BAR.

The MAYOR - who is also the bartender, enters, sets up the bar and turns on the TV. (There is a dropflap/television built into the wall, which will be used throughout the show for televised announcements) On the television is MUFFY VON BRAUN, a news anchorwoman.

VON BRAUN
(on tv)
This is Muffy Von Braun, at Fox News. As this election evening ends, and polls around the nation prepare to close, stay tuned as we reflect on the last glorious days of the George W. Bush presidency, and prepare America for our next commander and chief with a Fox News special: Election 2008 - Countdown to Armageddon!

BETTY enters, picks up remote, turns off the TV.

MAYOR
How's it goin', Betty?

BETTY
My backs all outta wack again...

MAYOR
Ain't surprised, you sleepin' in that car -

BETTY
What choice I got? Hospital bills cost us the house.

Mayor
What're ya drinkin'?

BETTY
What difference does it make?

MAYOR turns on the TV with a remote.

VON BRAUN
(on tv)
On the East Coast the polls have already closed, and soon the Midwest will be finished!

BETTY
You got that right! Finished!

BETTY turns off the TV.

MAYOR
Come on, don't be like that...

BETTY
I got one skill. One! I can screw an eraser on a pencil faster than anybody! Lighting Betty, they used to call me! But now...

MAYOR
Come on. Betty - If life gives you lemons, you know what you do?

BETTY
Sell 'em?

MAYOR
You make lemonade!

BETTY
I don't want lemonade! I want my job!

MAYOR
It's like that time back in '72, when we were down by seven to Lincoln High -

BETTY
Oh no -

The MAYOR begins to act out his football story.

MAYOR
17 seconds left, fourth down and a long 8, at our own 37! Totally hopeless!

BETTY
You told this story -

MAYOR
But did we punt?

BETTY
When they closed the unemployment office!

MAYOR
I take the snap, drop back, I heave a 40 yard bomb to Frank Yablonski at the 23! Frank takes it -

BETTY
And fumbles it out of bounds! We lost the game!

MAYOR
The point is it's fourth down with this whole town! There's only seconds left! It's time for all of us to take the ball, drop back, heave it down the sidelines and -

BETTY
Sell lemonade?

ROSA enters, wearing a coat and carrying a large suitcase.

MAYOR
We just gotta catch the ball and run!

ROSA
Oh sweet Lord! We lost that game, Robert!

MAYOR
(bitterly)
I know...

BETTY
Takin' a trip, Miss Rosa?

ROSA
I'm leaving Bluebird.

MAYOR
Yer leavin'?

ROSA
No, I'm leaving - with an "G" at the end. Leaving. May I please have a beer?

MAYOR
Never seen you drink before.

The MAYOR opens a beer for ROSA, hands it to her.

ROSA
I've never had to leave my home before. It breaks my heart. I helped most of you learn to read, watched you grow up, watched you have children, move away, but I never thought... but I'm a librarian, and Bluebird doesn't have a library anymore.

Song: "LEAVIN' TOWN"

ROSA (cont'd)

THE THOUGHT THAT I WOULD LEAVE THIS TOWN

NEVER CROSSED MY MIND.

BUT WHEN THEY CLOSED DOWN

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

I KNEW I WASN'T FAR BEHIND.

AND YOU KNOW,

WITH ALL THE BOOKS THAT I'VE READ,

I COULD SEE HOW THE STORY WOULD END.

I'M JUST ONE MORE OUT OF WORK,
WASHED UP OLD WOMAN LEAVING TOWN.
AND THERE'S ONE MORE OUT OF LUCK,
HOUSE OF LEARNING SHUT DOWN.
ONE MORE BUILDING STANDING EMPTY.
ONE LESS JOB IN THIS LAND OF PLENTY...

I HATE TO SAY THAT THE COUNTRY DOESN'T CARE,
BUT THAT'S THE WAY THAT IT LOOKS.
WHEN YOU SPEND ALL YOUR BUCKS ON BOMBS
YOU HAVE NOTHING LEFT FOR BOOKS!
NURTURING MINDS IS NOT A NATIONAL PRIORITY
WHEN EDUCATED PEOPLE ARE
A TROUBLESOME MINORITY...

AND ONE MORE OUT OF WORK,
WASHED UP OLD WOMAN LEAVING TOWN.

ALL

AND THERE'S ONE MORE OUT OF LUCK
HOUSE OF LEARNING SHUT DOWN.
ONE MORE BUILDING STANDING EMPTY,

ROSA

ONE LESS JOB IN THE LAND OF PLENTY...

THESE BOARDED UP WINDOWS AND DOORS
USED TO HOLD HOUSES,

AND CHURCHES, AND STORES!

BUT THERE'S NO ONE AT HOME ANYMORE

WE CAN'T GET BACK WHAT WE HAD BEFORE!

ONE MORE OUT OF WORK,

WASHED UP OLD WOMAN LEAVING TOWN.

AND ONE MORE OUT OF LUCK,

HOUSE OF LEARNING'S SHUT DOWN.

ONE MORE BUILDING STANDING EMPTY,

ONE LESS JOB IN THE LAND OF PLENTY...

ROSA *(cont'd)*
Well, I'd better get myself to the bus station -

EUGENE enters. He trips on the way in.

EUGENE
Gosh darn that cracked sidewalk!

EUGENE sees ROSA

EUGENE(cont'd)
Miss Rosa...

ROSA
Mr. Salinski...

EUGENE
Were you going to leave without saying goodbye?

ROSA
I thought it would be best.

EUGENE
(awkwardly)
Miss Rosa, I want to tell you...

ROSA
Mr. Salinski?

EUGENE
All these years, I've always... you -

ROSA
Yes -

EUGENE
You've been so kind, and lovely, and I...

ROSA
You've always been a gentleman...

EUGENE
I just wanted you to know that maybe -

ROSA
Yes?

EUGENE
Maybe -

ROSA
(hopefully)
Maybe?

EUGENE
Maybe... if you librarians didn't have a union this wouldn't have happened!

Music crash.

ROSA
What?

EUGENE
If it didn't cost so much to keep the library open -

ROSA
If all the fat cats just paid their taxes -

EUGENE
If big government is the answer why don't you have a job?

ROSA
If no government is the answer maybe you should give back your veteran's benefits!

EUGENE
That's different! I earned those benefits!

ROSA
And I earned mine!

EUGENE
It's not the same!

ROSA
It's the American way!

EUGENE
In Cuba!

ROSA

Eugene!

EUGENE

Rosa!

BOTH

I...

Pause.

BETTY

You want we should leave?

ROSA

No. I'll go. I don't want to miss my bus. Goodbye, Mr. Salinski. Goodbye.

EUGENE

Goodbye, Miss Rosa.

ROSA exits,, as EUGENE slumps in despair..

BETTY

Well, Library's gone...

MAYOR

High school got closed 'cuz weren't enough kids.

BETTY

Even the football field is –

BETTY stops, realizing what she's about to say might be too much for the MAYOR.

MAYOR

(fearfully)

Is... what?

BETTY

...Covered with weeds...

MAYOR

Oh, God! (he sobs tragically) Well, it don't matter! 'Cuz we ain't leavin', right Betty?

BETTY

Only thing keepin' me here is the cost of gasoline! It'd cost me a weeks Social Security to get the Oldsmobile outta this state!

BETTY starts to go.

MAYOR

Where ya goin'?

BETTY
I gotta get back to the car. Last one in has to sleep on the parking brake.

BETTY exits.

MAYOR
(to EUGENE)
Want a beer?

EUGENE
Sure.

MAYOR
You know, yer Daddy once told me the town of Bluebird was named after the bluebird of happiness. Said as long as we worked together we wouldn't have no worries.

EUGENE
That's what he'd say.

MAYOR
Nice man. (nonchalantly) Too bad he was a Red.

Music sting, EUGENE jolt. DORIS and TOMMY enter with voting machine.

DORIS
Here ya'll are! I figured you'd would be in the Touchdown! Look who I got with me!

MAYOR
Tommy?

EUGENE
Tommy!

MAYOR
You back fer good this time?

TOMMY
I hope so...

EUGENE
Army make a man outta ya?

TOMMY
I guess. It weren't like you said it's be...

MAYOR
This calls for the good stuff! I got some champagne in the back!

MAYOR leaves. as DORIS sets up voting machine.

EUGENE
What'er ya'll doin'?

DORIS
Rustlin' folks up to vote! We ain't found nobody, and it's almost time fer the polls t'close!

EUGENE
Folks feelin' too low, I guess.

TOMMY
We went by the pencil factory, but the night shift weren't there. It looked all closed up.

EUGENE
And it's gonna stay that way. Ain't ya heard? Lady McAlester's movin' the whole shebang overseas!

TOMMY
(outraged)
Movin'!

DORIS
You been watchin' the election on the news? Ain't it excitin'?

DORIS doesn't notice the tension in the conversation, as she totally excitedly focused on her part in getting people to vote. She is turns on the TV.

VON BRAUN
(on tv)
And it's almost time for the polls in the plains states to close -

TOMMY
I was away, fightin...and My job's supposed to be waitn' fer me!

EUGENE
Yer job ain't here no more! It's gone! Too expensive to make pencils here!

DORIS
Ya'll better hurry up and vote!

EUGENE
It's all these taxes! Payin' for all these socialist programs!

DORIS
Votin' time! Come on, Eugene.

EUGENE goes to the voting machine.

TOMMY
I don't recollect McAlester complainin' 'bout the town's taxes supportin' her factory!

Lizzie Calogero as CLIFF WINDSWEPT

Lisa Hori-Garcia as KWAME YAMAGUCHI

Noah Butler as MAYOR, Adrian Mejia as TOMMY, Lizzie Calogero as CLIFF WINDSWEPT Photo by Rog Franklin

VON BRAUN

Just a few more minutes -

EUGENE stops, crosses back to TOMMY.

EUGENE

What are you sayin?

DORIS

Polls are closin'!

DORIS pushes EUGENE back to the voting machine.

TOMMY

Folks always complain 'bout government spendin', unless it's spending on them!

EUGENE crosses back to TOMMY. Toddler starts to cry.

EUGENE

We don't need government money!

TOMMY

Not even for... the Library?

EUGENE
(thinking of ROSA)

The Liberry...

VON BRAUN

Time is ticking down...

DORIS pushes EUGENE back over to the voting machine.

DORIS
(desperately)

Come on!

TOMMY

But it ain't socialist when it's money for stuff you care about!

Music sting, EUGENE jolt!

DORIS

Come on Eugene!

EUGENE
(very angrily)

I ain't no Red!

In his angry outburst EUGENE spills his beer on the voting machine.

VON BRAUN

and...

The Machine sputters , shakes, rattles, short circuits, and explodes.. Stunned silence.

VON BRAUN (cont'd)
The polls are closed in the Heartland!

Toddler continues to cry. TOMMY turns off TV. DORIS turns furiously on EUGENE and TOMMY.

DORIS
What's the matter with ya'll? My John is out there fightin' so's...and you don't even...

MAYOR re-enters, smiling.

MAYOR
Here's the champagne!

DORIS leaves crying.

EUGENE
(to TOMMY)
Welcome home...

Eugene leaves.

MAYOR
What happened?

TOMMY
Never mind. Can I have a drink?

MAYOR
(sadly)
Sure. Mind if I join you?

TOMMY shrugs. MAYOR turns on TV and crosses to the bar, pours them both drinks. As they drink there is the sound of loud gears turning as The Sun goes moves a little closer to setting. On the television is CLIFF WINDSWEPT, a news anchorman.

WINDSWEPT
Good evening, America! I'm Cliff Windswept and –

Dramatic music!

ANNOUNCER VOICE
THIS IS CNN!

WINDSWEPT
We have word just in - the polls in the Mountain Time Zone are closed! And as we wait for tonight's final results please stayed tuned for:

ANNOUNCER VOICE
CNN Special Report!

WINDSWEPT
Anna Nicole Smith: Who would she have voted for?

MAYOR turns off TV with remote.

TOMMY
You know, when I was over there I thought I was protectin' you, and Rosa, and all ya'll from the Taliban and the Hussains who wanted to tear this country down! So I did (thoughtfully) what I did... But still we lose the Library, the factory -

MAYOR
That there is two strikes against Bluebird...

TOMMY
Yep...

MAYOR
(trying to rouse some enthusiasm)
Just like that time back in '71, in the game against Wichita High -

TOMMY
We lost that game, too, Robert!

MAYOR
(tearfully)
I know!

They drink again, Loud sound of gears as the Sun goes a bit lower. Time has passed, and MAYOR and TOMMY hey are drunker. The television springs to life, now with KWAME YAMAGUCHI, a super-cool news anchorwoman.

YAMAGUCHI
What up! This is Kwame Yamaguchi in the house! Welcome once again to VH1's Hip Hop Pimp My Vote MId-Fall/Spring Break Election Day Special! Yo, the polls on the West Coast have closed, dawg! Now all we have to do is wait for the result-izzles in Hawaii, and bam!! Meantimes let's check in with our political correspondent Flav-A-Flav!!!

TOMMY turn off TV.

MAYOR
No, the worst was the locust swarm of '93!

TOMMY
That was when ConAgra finished buyin' everything up. We woulda held out 'gainst them and the locusts - 'cept that tornado sucked up all our topsoil!

MAYOR
Least it blew the locusts away.

Loud gear sounds as the Sun goes the rest of the way down. TOMMY and the MAYOR are drunkenly singing.

TOMMY AND MAYOR
(singing)

THERE ARE SOME WHO MIGHT LIVE

LIVES OF SORROW -

YAMAGUCHI
Yo! And it's official! The polls done be closed!

MAYOR
(loudly singing)

BUT I KNOW THAT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME -

TOMMY
Shhhh!

YAMAGUCHI
And here is VH1's official predicshizzle for the Presidizzle elecshizzle!

TOMMY AND MAYOR
What?

YAMAGUCHI
Oh snap! This is impossible!

TOMMY
(to MAYOR)
What?

YAMAGUCHI
With 99.999 Percent of the votes counted we have -

BOTH
(to YAMAGUCHI)
What!?!

YAMAGUCHI
A tie!

BOTH
A tie?

MAYOR
I guess it all comes down to that last .001 percent.

YAMAGUCHI
It all comes down to the last .001 percent!

TOMMY
Hey, that's what you said!

MAYOR
That's why I'm the Mayor! Fashizzle!

YAMAGUCHI
A single district has not reported any results, the one town in the whole country that could decide the whole election...

BOTH
(softly singing)

'CAUSE I'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN OLD -

YAMAGUCHI
Bluebird, Kanzizzle!

Pause.

TOMMY AND MAYOR
What?

YAMAGUCHI
Oh, snap!

The Bar disappears, and is replaced with -

SCENE 4

THE FIRST-CLASS SECTION OF AN AIRPLANE.

FAUSTINA enters. Behind her is a cut out of the inside of a 747, and overhead a model jet flies about the set representing the plane she is on. FAUSTINA. is aglow with anticipation, delightfully reading a letter as she flies to Washington, D.C. Light, breezy dance music is playing on the plane.

FAUSTINA
(reading)
"To: Ms. Faustina Page. From: J. Loudon Hancock, Director of Human Services, United States Federal Election Committee. Dear Ms. Page, Thank you so much for your application for the position of Assistant Under Secretary of Regional Oversight. By now you must be flying to join us here in Washington, D.C., ready to start this most important of jobs."

A STEWARDESS appears with a bottle and glass from behind the cut out as FAUSTINA basks in the letter.

STEWARDESS
Wine?

FAUSTINA
Thank you.

STEWARDESS hands FAUSTINA a glass of wine, exits behind cut-out.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*
(reading as she drinks.)
"With your passion and professionalism we cannot imagine a more qualified, deserving applicant."

A STEWARD appears from behind the cut out.

STEWARD
Champagne?

FAUSTINA
Thank you!

STEWARD takes wine glass, replaces it with tall champagne glass, exits behind cut-out.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*
(taking a delicious sip)
An office, in Washington! With a staff, in Washington! And a view of Washington - in Washington!

Adrian Mejia as STEWARD, Velina Brown as FAUSTINA Photo by Rog Franklin

Song: "WASHINGTON, D.C."

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL MY LIFE

FOR THE OPPORTUNITY

TO HAVE AN OFFICE OF MY OWN

IN WASHINGTON –

STEWARDESS and STEWARD poke there heads out from behind the cut-out to sing with FAUSTINA

FAUSTINA, STEWARDESS, STEWARD

DEE CEE!

FAUSTINA

RIDING PLANE, AND TRUCKS, AND TRAINS

THROUGH SHIFTING SCENERY,

NEXT TRIP I TAKE HAD BETTER LEAD

TO WASHINGTON –

FAUSTINA, STEWARDESS, STEWARD

DEE CEE!

FAUSTINA

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON –

FAUSTINA, STEWARDESS, STEWARD

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON –

FAUSTINA
(reading with luxurious confidence)

"And that is why, Miss Page, with all your accomplishments, it is so difficult to give you this rejection."

The model of the 747, music, and FAUSTINA screech to a mid-air halt.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*

Rejection?

The plane reverses direction as FAUSTINA, stunned, continues reading.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*
"Given the unfortunate events in your most recent district, which have brought our entire election to a standstill, the Committee feels it must pass on your application at this time." But... But... *(damningly)* NEBRASKA!

STEWARDESS & STEWARD
(cheerfully correcting)
Kansas!

FAUSTINA
(reading)
"We are very sorry."

FAUSTINA collapses into her seat.

STEWARDESS & STEWARD
(cheerfully, and if in letter)
"However..."

FAUSTINA
However?

FAUSTINA perks up with desperate hope, continues to read letter.

FAUSTINA (cont'd)
(reading)
"However! There is one hope - Go back to Bluebird, and find a way to solve this problem quickly and efficiently – "

The cut-out, the STEWARDESS, and the STEWARD exit, and the model 747 flies away.

FAUSTINA (cont'd)
(reading)
"That may show the Committee the sort of resourcefulness required for so important a job–"

The plane has been replaced with a cut-out representing the interior of a truck. A TRUCK DRIVER appears with a cup of coffee. He stands next to FAUSTINA, as if driving. Both bump along what seems like a rough road. The light, breezy music has been replaced with country on the radio. FAUSTINA is clearly not happy with the turn of events.

FAUSTINA (cont'd)
(reading)
"Please understand that you will be on your own. The federal government cannot interfere with a state's electoral process - at least not twice in one Administration."

TRUCK DRIVER
Coffee?

FAUSTINA
"Resolve this situation and the Committee will show it's gratitude to you. Please try to get those results before this turns into a media spectacle."

On the other side of the stage CLIFF WINDSWEPT, a dapper reporter, enters. Through the next section each reporter speaks out, as if to their own camera crew.

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
This is Cliff Windswept!

RICARDO SUAVE, another dapper reporter, enters.

SUAVE
(to camera)
Yo soy Ricardo Suave!

STEFFI KLUGSHEISSER, a stern reporter, enters.

KLUGSCHEISSER
(to camera)
Hier ist Steffi Klugscheisser!

WINDSWEPT
Reporting live -

WINDSWEPT, SUAVE, KLUGSCHEISSER
In Bluebird, Kansas!

FAUSTINA
(reading)
"Of course, it may be too late, but do your best. Good Luck, sincerely, J. Loudon Hancock, United States Federal Election Committee."

FAUSTINA is tired, rumpled, heartbroken - but determined.

FAUSTINA*(cont'd)*

WORKED ELECTIONS IN SEVEN STATES

WITH COOL EFFICIENCY

CALM CONSISTENCY COMPLETE INTEGRITY

OR AT LEAST SOME DEGREE OF INTEGRITY

NO TEENY EENY WEENY TOWN'S GONNA

KEEP ME FROM MY DESTINY

IN WASHINGTON D.C.!

FAUSTINA exits Loud gear sound as the bright, smily Sun comes up, stopping at it's apex with another loud "Ding!"

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
Yesterday few had heard of it...

SUAVE
(to camera)
Un punto de poco importansia...

KLUGSCHEISSER
(to camera)
Bluebird ist geschraubt!

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
But now the eyes of the world turn to this... tiny town, this miniature metropolis, this -

SUAVE
(to camera)
Pueblito olvidado...

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
This -

KLUGSCHEISSER
(to camera)
Kleinstadt...

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
- that's causing a major problem!

SUAVE
(to camera)
Con una problema gigantesca!

KLUGSCHEISSER
(to camera)
Die Stadt hats verschissen! Die Leute habens verschissen! Und mal wieder zeigt uns Amerika, dass es ein Land ist, welches keine Ahnung hat und nicht einmal sich selbst zur Demokratie fuehren kann! ... Es ist BESCHISSEN!!!

SUAVE and KLUGSCHEISSER exit.

WINDSWEPT
But let's look deeper, and find out what started this-

Noah Butler as HEIDI KLUGSCHEISSER, Lizzie Calogero as CLIFF WINDSWEPT, Adrian Mejia as RICO SUAVE Photo by Rog Franklin

ANNOUNCER VOICE
CNN REPORTS!

Dramatic music!

WINDSWEPT
BLOODCLOT IN THE HEARTLAND! With me now is Doris Bradley -

DORIS enters, smiling.

WINDSWEPT (cont'd)
Poll supervisor.

DORIS
(to camera)
First I'd like to say hi to my husband, John. Hey, Honey! (she holds up baby) This here is yer son, Travis! I can't wait for you to meet him, he's got yer eyes!

WINDSWEPT
Your husband is in the army?

DORIS
(proudly)
Yes sir! Over in Afghanistan!

WINDSWEPT
How ironic that as he fights to bring freedom to that land his own wife has handicapped democracy here, at home!

DORIS
(stunned)
Me?

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
For it was her polling station that plunged America into this-

ANNOUNCER VOICE
CNN REPORTS!
Dramatic music!

WINDSWEPT
NATIONAL NIGHTMARE!

DORIS
No! I was workin' hard, like I do every election, and what happened was-

WENDELL enters. He is still dragging his big crucifix, and looks emotionally lost.

WENDELL
Jesus done it! It's a punishment from the Lord!

DORIS
(embarrassed)
Wendell! We're on TV!

WENDELL
Don't ya see, Doris? It's just like when I lost my Daddy's farm! I wasn't worthy! We got to repent!

WINDSWEPT is excited with the prospect of showing small-town "crazies." He motions camera to cover WENDELL.

WINDSWEPT
Jesus Christ took your father's farm?

DORIS
I thought it was 'cuz they cut off them subsidies -

WENDELL
We need God's laws! We have to stop teaching the evolution in our schools!

DORIS
Wendell!

WENDELL
And the sexual education!

DORIS
Wendell!

WENDELL
And... no homosexuals inside a mile of any child!

DORIS
Hush your mouth!

WENDELL
I got it! Anyone caught teaching the evolution or the sexual education near a child is officially declared a homosexual!

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
And that, America, is Bluebird, Kansas.

DORIS
(desperately , to camera)
No, it ain't!

WENDELL
(referencing his Jesus)
His eyes... they follow you around the room...

EUGENE enter.

EUGENE
Wendell! Git outta here! Makin' us all look like wackos!

WENDELL
I'm just sayin'.

WENDELL exits.

WiNDSWEPT
Now just a minute -

EUGENE
Wendell thinks everything happens 'cause of sinnin'. Well, it don't!

DORIS
Thank you, Eugene.

EUGENE
It's because of communists!

DORIS
(panicked)
No!

EUGENE
Reds have undermined our government, taxed our companies out of the country, and made us so weak we can't even make pencils!

WiNDSWEPT
Pencils?

EUGENE
Not even the stubby ones!

WINDSWEPT is reveling in the "local color" as TOMMY enters.

TOMMY
Hey, Doris, I was just going to -

WINDSWEPT
Well, if it isn't one of our brave fighting men! Come back to the small town that bore him.

TOMMY
(camera shy)
Howdy...

WINDSWEPT
Let's find out from this humble hero of the heartland why his town has become -

ANNOUNCER VOICE
CNN REPORTS!
Dramatic music!

WINDSWEPT
GOLGOTHA IN THE GRASSLANDS!

TOMMY
Well, I don't know about all that -

WINDSWEPT
So, do you think Jesus broke the voting machine?

TOMMY
Nope.

WINDSWEPT
Communists?

TOMMY
No.

WINDSWEPT
Aliens?

TOMMY
No.

WINDSWEPT
Are you sure you're even from this town?

FAUSTINA enter, tries to take command of situation.

FAUSTINA
Everything is under control! It's all being taken care of.

WINDSWEPT
And you are?

FAUSTINA
(to camera)
I'm assistant sub-secretary to the junior under-supervisor, Faustina Page.

DORIS
Miss Page! I sure am glad to see you! Doris Bradley.

FAUSTINA
I've already sent for a technician from Votatron, and soon we will either have the original votes, or the town will simply re-rote, and fulfill the promise of American Democracy!

WINDSWEPT
And then, hopefully, once again, America will all be able to forget the town of Bluebird, Kansas, our:

ANNOUNCER VOICE

CNN REPORTS!

Dramatic music!

WINDSWEPT

CORNHUSKER CALAMITY!

FAUSTINA

No. Cliff, no! That's Nebraska! This is -

ALL BUT WINDSWEPT

Kansas!

FAUSTINA

We would never forget Bluebird! Though it is a small town, it's just as important as big cities, like Topeka and Wichita!

TOMMY

Well, that's good to hear, 'cause around here -

TOMMY trips on sidewalk, twisting his ankle.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Aahrg!

DORIS

TOMMY!

EUGENE

You alright?

TOMMY

Darn that sidewalk! All busted up and cracked! Government cares so much 'bout us, why don't they fix up the sidewalk?

WINDSWEPT senses a story, turns to FAUSTINA.

WiNDSWEPT

Ms. Page?

FAUSTINA

Well, I'm sure it's just an oversight...

TOMMY

Politicians always sayin' they care 'bout us, but when it comes to spendin' some of our taxes on us, there's all the time some oversight -

FAUSTINA

Well, it's not my responsibility -

WINDSWEPT

(to camera)

So spoke a cold, uncaring government bureaucrat -

FAUSTINA

No!

WINDSWEPT

(to camera)

And as one of America's heroes stumbles over the shattered sidewalks -

TOMMY tries to walk, but it's too painful.

TOMMY

Aahrg!

FAUSTINA

I'm sure it will get fixed soon -

WINDSWEPT

(to camera)

She can fix the cracked voting machine, but can she fix this soldier's crumbling dream - here in:

ANNOUNCER VOICE

CNN REPORTS!

Dramatic music!

WINDSWEPT

AMERICA'S BROKEN BREADBASKET!

TOMMY, DORIS, EUGENE, WENDELL exit.

FAUSTINA

I'll fix it! Yes, of course! Let me just make some calls, I'm sure I can get that taken care of right away!

WINDSWEPT

(to camera)

Well, there you have it, America! Sounds like there might be a change coming to, this High Plains Hamlet, this bucolic bailiwick, this shattered shire. I'm Cliff Windswept, reporting live from Bluebird, Kansas. AND THIS:

Dramatic music!

ANNOUNCER VOICE

IS CNN!

WINDSWEPT exits as FAUSTINA make a call.

FAUSTINA

Hello? Mr. Hancock? This is Faustina Page, and I have to talk to you...

FAUSTINA exits. Loud sound of gears as the Sun goes down.

Lizzie Calogero as BETTY, Adrian Mejia as TOMMY, Velina Brown as FAUSTINA
Photo by Rog Franklin

SCENE 5

THE TOUCHDOWN BAR.

The TECHNICIAN, carrying a small briefcase, timidly enters the bar and silently looks around. MAYOR enters.

MAYOR

Can I help you?

The TECHNICIAN looks at him for a moment, then holds up briefcase.

MAYOR *(cont'd)*

Oh! You must be the technician from Votatron!

TECHNICIAN silently stares at MAYOR.

MAYOR *(cont'd)*

'Course ya are! I'm Mayor Roberts - and you are...?

MAYOR holds out hand. TECHNICIAN silently looks MAYOR's hand, then back at MAYOR, who is a little unsettled.

MAYOR *(cont'd)*

Machine's right over there...

MAYOR points out voting machine to TECHNICIAN, who, seeing the machine, suddenly changes.TECHNICIAN rushes to the machine, enfolding it like a long lost, injured lover. DORIS enters.

DORIS

Hey. Whatcha all doin'?

MAYOR

Miss Page sent that fella to fix up the machine!

DORIS
(to TECHNICIAN)

Howdy!

The TECHNICIAN holds the machine tighter, and gives DORIS a bitter, untrusting glare – after all DORIS had been entrusted with the voting machine. The door opens, and EUGENE and TOMMY poke their heads in.. TOMMY is very excited

TOMMY

Mayor Roberts, you better get out here and look at this!

EUGENE

I tell ya, It ain't right!

DORIS

What's going on?

EUGENE

They're fixin' it! The sidewalk!

DORIS and MAYOR go to door, look.

EUGENE*(cont'd)*

I bet that's how Stalin got started - people askin' him to fix a sidewalk, next thing you know all the women are hairy!

TOMMY, EUGENE enter.

TOMMY

Them's our taxes, too!

EUGENE

Yeah, that's right, Vladimir! It's all ours, all the money-

MAYOR

I don't see what's wrong with them fixin' the sidewalk!

EUGENE

Hell, the whole country is ours! All the taxes are supposed to be spent on us! Why not just ask them to repave the whole dang street!

Pause.

TOMMY

Why not!?!

MAYOR, DORIS, EUGENE stop, and looks at TOMMY..

TOMMY (cont'd)

Why not get the street fixed?

MAYOR

What?

TOMMY

County's been promisin' to repave it! And the street lights! They been out for years!

EUGENE

So?

TOMMY

I's just thinkin'...Country had to wait one day for this here voting machine to get fixed, and we got a new sidewalk. What could we get if they had to wait fer... two?

EUGENE

Sounds like blackmail!

TOMMY

Street, streetlights, post office! Eugene! Maybe we could git money for -

EUGENE

No!

TOMMY

The Library!

EUGENE

The Library...Miss Rosa... no... no!

Music sting EUGENE jolts.

EUGENE(cont'd)

(angrily)

I ain't no Red!

FAUSTINA enters.

FAUSTINA

(cheerfully)

Okay, Bluebirders –

EUGENE

(to TOMMY)

Get thee behind me, Che!

FAUSTINA

Umm...is there a problem?

MAYOR

No... ain't no problem...

FAUSTINA

(to Technician)

Did you get the old votes out?

TECHNICIAN shakes head "no".

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*

DAMN!

From this point on whenever FAUSTINA speaks in ALL CAPS it indicates that, for a moment, and in a demonic voice, she has revealed her more obviously evil, selfish side. As time goes on and she becomes more desperate covering this becomes harder.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*

I mean darn. Can they use it to vote again?

TECHNICIAN stands, gives okie-dokie sign.

FAUSTINA *(cont'd)*
Great! Okay! It's time for you to re-cast your ballots!

TECHNICIAN sets up the voting machine.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
Who's going to be first?

DORIS
I guess I'll -

TOMMY
Let me! I'll go first!

FAUSTINA
Good for you! And if you hurry I can still catch the 2:45 back to Washington!

TOMMY
Before I vote, I just wanna say, Miss Page... from all of us in Bluebird, Kansas... where we ain't got nothin', but we could sure use somethin'...

FAUSTINA
Yes?

TOMMY
All I got to say is -

TOMMY purposefully spills his beer on the voting machine, short circuiting it again..

TOMMY (cont'd)
Oops.

FAUSTINA
Oh my God!

DORIS
Tommy!

FAUSTINA
(to TECHNICIAN)
No, no, no, no, NO! Can you fix it?

TECHNICIAN, horrified, picks up machine and runs from the bar..

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
How long? What am I going to do?

TOMMY
Well, since you asked, I was thinkin'... wouldn't our new sidewalk look even nicer with a brand new paved street next to it?

DORIS
(frustrated, at TOMMY)

You –

DORIS chases after the TECHNICIAN, followed by TOMMY.

EUGENE

I'm sorry Ms. Page.

MAYOR and EUGENE exits.

FAUSTINA
(sadly singing)

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL MY LIFE FOR

THE OPPORTUNITY

TO HAVE AN OFFICE OF MY OWN IN

WASHINGTON DEE. CEE.

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON,

WASHINGTON –

FAUSTINA's phone rings. She answers as the scene shifts around her.

SCENE 6

ON MAIN STREET.

FAUSTINA on the phone.

FAUSTINA
Director Hancock! I was just about to call...no, no we couldn't get the original votes. Well, yes, there's been a little, I wouldn't call it a glitch... Oh, they're very happy with the sidewalk! ALMOST TOO HAPPY, IN FACT! The problem? Well, not a problem! I guess I would call it more of a -

WINDSWEPT enters, reporting.

WINDSWEPT
(to camera)
HOLD-UP IN THE HEARTLAND!

FAUSTINA
No! Not at all! It's just that townspeople... now that they have the sidewalk they realize this is their chance to get a little -

Clearly Director Hancock is watching tv on his end of the conversation, which FAUSTINA can hear and is reacting to.

WINDSWEPT
BALLOT BOX BLACKMAIL!

FAUSTINA
I can handle it! It'll just take a little more federal money. Well, I'm doing the best I can, Director Hancock, but I am in the middle of a -

WINDSWEPT
RED STATE REVOLUTION!

FAUSTINA
Could you -

ANNOUNCER VOICE
THIS IS CNN!

FAUSTINA
Could you turn the TV down please!

WINDSWEPT exits.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
I know, but... the job? My application? No, please, I want to work in Washington! I can't tell you how much I want to get out of Nebraska... wherever. And... oh. I promise I'll take care of it! I'll do anything. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I WILL GET THOSE VOTES FOR YOU! What? Under Secretary of Regional Oversight? (pleased) But my application was for assistant... well, thank you!

FAUSTINA hangs up, smiles, exits. TOMMY and DORIS enter, with Toddler and Baby.

DORIS

You did that on purpose!

TOMMY

(lying)

It was an accident!

DORIS

Just like the time you accidentally drove Daddy's truck to the store when you wuz nine? And "accidentally" lost all yer report cards? And that time you spilled Daddy's spit cup on Aunt Belle -

TOMMY

She shouldn't have hit me with that chicken!

DORIS

Well, this time you "accidentally" stopped a whole darn election!

TOMMY

Maybe I did, but think on it! Right now everybody is watchin' us, and waitin' for Bluebird to end the election! Say we do - then what? We get forgotten again, left out, left to die -

DORIS

We ain't dyin!

TOMMY

We ain't livin'!

DORIS

What about our votes?

TOMMY

I ain't sayin' we don't vote! You know me - I ain't never missed an election!

DORIS

Well, you have now!

Toddler starts to cry.

TOMMY

We just make 'em git the roads in shape while we can, maybe fix the hospital - Doris, we could git them t' reopen the nursery school, so's you wouldn't have t'drive Daisy all the way to Covington every morning!

DORIS

We ain't that kinda folks, asking fer help, beggin' fer scraps!

TOMMY

I ain't talkin' about beggin'!

Toddler lets out another burst.

TOMMY *(cont'd)*
I'm talkin' about gettin'! Them's our tax dollars! Where's our sidewalk, and street, and library, and school money's goin'? Country's got enough to send me to fight fer people who don't even want me there, why ain't there money to fix this here?

DORIS
I thought you was over there, overseas, fightin' to keep America safe!

TOMMY
Doris -

Baby cries.

DORIS
And my John is still over there! He ain't here to mess things up like you are! What's he protectin' there if we don't even vote?

TOMMY
What's he protectin' if we just let this here fall apart?

TOMMY exits, as DORIS picks up baby to comfort it and stop its crying.

Song: "EASY LIFE"

DORIS

SEEMS SO LONG AGO YOUR DADDY LEFT HOME

TO GO AND FIGHT IN THAT WAR,

WHAT WILL HE SAY WHEN HE COMES BACK,

AND FINDS THE TOWN HE LOVES'

NOT WHAT IT WAS BEFORE?

EACH DAY I PUT ON A HAPPY FACE,

EACH NIGHT I'M ALL ALONE AND CRYIN’.

WHAT KIND OF LIFE CAN YOU GIVE TO A CHILD

IN A LITTLE TOWN THAT'S DYING?

WE AIN'T NEVER HAD AN EASY LIFE,

AND IT'S GETTIN HARDER DAY BY DAY.

IF YOU HAD A CHANCE TO SAVE THIS TOWN –

WOULD YOU TAKE IT...

OR WOULD YOU LET IT SLIP AWAY?

YOUR DADDY KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOUR SMILE,

I SEND YOUR PICTURES IN MY LETTERS.

HE RISKS HIS LIFE EVERY DAY AND NIGHT

TRYIN TO MAKE YOUR WORLD A LITTLE BETTER.

I'VE ALWAYS TRUSTED WHAT HE'S

DOIN' THERE IS RIGHT,

I NEVER LET MYSELF DOUBT IT.

BUT HERE AT HOME THINGS KEEP GETTIN WORSE,

AND NO ONE'S DOIN MUCH ABOUT IT.

WE AIN'T NEVER HAD AN EASY LIFE,

AND IT'S GETTIN HARDER DAY BY DAY.

IF WE HAVE A CHANCE TO SAVE THIS TOWN

WILL WE TAKE IT –

OR WILL WE LET IT SLIP AWAY?

DORIS exits with baby and toddler.

Loud gear sound as The Sun comes up - Ding! RICARDO SUAVE enters. Behind him a group of WORKERS enter, and begin repairing the town.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as DORIS Photo by Rog Franklin

SCENE 7

ON MAIN STREET.

Loud gear sound as The Sun comes up - Ding! RICARDO SUAVE enters. Behind him a group of WORKERS enter, and begin repairing the town. SUAVE begins his report.

SUAVE
(to camera)
Que pasa en este pueblito? Con la elecion completament parada, la gente a tomado esta oportunidad para gritar, basta! Queremos, no! Demandamos una vida mas buena! Yo me pregunto, Richard Suave, se an vuelto locos o que! Podra ser orguyesa? Quisas una pacion profunda. Esta calle nueva, la esquela abierta de nuevo, y el hospital reparado, son testemonios del amor que la gente aqui en Bluebird siente por su pueblito. La inspiracion que siento al ver todo esto me a tocado profundamente en el corazon. Desde Bluebird Kansas, yo soy Ricardo Suave.

SUAVE exits, followed by the last of the WORKERS as the scene shifts to inside the bar. TECHNICIAN enters with voting machine. The Technician carefully places the machine down, and begins to leave, but cannot. Overcome with emotion - and after making sure they are alone, TECHNICIAN returns to machine, shyly presenting it with... a rose. After a moment of awkward affection, then dramatic looks, the scene becomes one of movement, then a passionate tango between the voting machine and the TECHNICIAN. At a particularly involved moment FAUSTINA enters.

Lizzie Calogero as TECHNICIAN Photo by Rog Franklin

Velina Brown as FAUSTINA, Lizzie Calogero as TECHNICIAN
Photos by Rog Franklin

FAUSTINA
Have you fixed that damn thing yet?!?

TECHNICIAN stops dancing, cringes.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
I'm sorry! I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me...I just want to know if you have been able to GET THOSE VOTES OUT OF THAT STUPID MACHINE!

TECHNICIAN, frightened, shakes head.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
DAMN! DAMN! DAMN! I mean... darn. Well, I guess they'll just have to vote again they CAN DO THAT, CAN'T THEY?

TECHNICIAN nods.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
GOOD! I mean... good. You've done a very nice job. NOW GO!

TECHNICIAN skitters away.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
No! Wait I'm sorry! COME BACK HERE! No, I mean, wait -

As FAUSTINA chases after TECHNICIAN. EUGENE and TOMMY enter.

EUGENE
It ain't right! Listen, when I was in the Army and we was fightin' the Viet-cong in them terrible, dark jungles -

TOMMY
I thought you was stationed over in Fort Riley -

EUGENE
It was the cold war and we had to keep the world from turnin' Red -

TOMMY
Ain't but seventy-five mile that way -

EUGENE
So's you kids, so all you kids, could grow up free! We was fightin' make things better for America! How's the government gonna have money to make things better if they keep payin' for all these improvements?

WENDELL has entered, without Jesus.

WENDELL
Hey, fellers. You seen them clouds?

TOMMY
Hey, Wendell.

WENDELL
Tornado weather 'bout to blow.

TOMMY
Where's Jesus?

WENDELL
(sadly)
I left him t'home. Whatcha all talkin' 'bout?

EUGENE
Comrade Tommy here still wants more government money spent on the town!

TOMMY
I just want what's ours.

EUGENE
Greed! That's what it is! Ain't I right, Wendell?

WENDELL
Greed... a terrible sin...

FAUSTINA enters, with DORIS and BETTY.

FAUSTINA
Alright! Here you are, ready to vote!

BETTY
I hope this isn't gonna take too long. I got the family double parked!

FAUSTINA
BUT IT'S TIME TO VOTE!

DORIS
Miss Page, I'm sorry for all the trouble.

FAUSTINA
That's alright, Doris. I'm just glad I...you can finally finish the election, and that I...you... have gotten that everything you... I deserve! All righty, then! Who's first?

TOMMY
But the Post Office still needs a roof!

EUGENE
Oh, for cryin' out loud!

TOMMY
And what about the library?

EUGENE
The Liberry...

FAUSTINA
NO! I mean... now, now - I think you've gotten all you can.

EUGENE
That's right!

FAUSTINA
You don't want to seem ungrateful, do you? I mean, the whole country is waiting for Bluebird to vote... and once you do, we will all be able to get on with MY LIFE! I mean... you'll be able to enjoy all the wonderful things you have here in... KANSAS!

EUGENE
Doris, get that there machine ready!

FAUSTINA
Yes.

DORIS
No.

FAUSTINA
WHAT?

DORIS

My brother's right.

FAUSTINA

What are you talking about?

DORIS

I don't rightly know... but I do know that street and sidewalk out there are the firstest new things I seent in this town fer a long time.

EUGENE

Not you, too!

DORIS

My John went to fight so's me, and Daisy and Travis could have a decent life. And you can't have no decent life when you can't afford food 'cuz you gotta buy gas to drive yer little girl forty miles to a nursery school!

FAUSTINA

FINE! I'LL TURN IT ON MYSELF!

FAUSTINA goes to machine, starts it.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)

Now, vote!

EUGENE

(points at TOMMY)

Don't let him get near that machine! Or her!

BETTY

I'll go first.

BETTY crosses to machine, hold a beer.

fAUSTINA

Right over here! It's all warmed up for you!

bETTY

Thank you, Miss Page. And thanks fer all ya done fer us...

FAUSTINA

That's alright. Just hurry along. I've got a reservation at the Washington Hilton.

BETTY

That's right...I heard you was gettin' a new job. Kicked upstairs. Good fer you. My job got moved away to Uzbekiwahtsitsplace. And now the family can't make it here no more.

BETTY moves to vote, stops.

BETTY (cont'd)

Unless there was some way ta keep McAlester from movin' the factory...

EUGENE
Government can't do everything, Betty!

BETTY goes to vote again, stops.

BETTY
Well, they could put a big tax on imported pencils.

EUGENE
Even those stubby golf ones?

fAUSTINA
Why would they do that?

BETTY threatens to pour her beer on the voting machine.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
No!

FAUSTINA grabs machine, spins it away from BETTY, but near TOMMY, who also has beer.

EUGENE
Look out!

EUGENE sees that TOMMY is a threat, grabs machine from FAUSTINA, swings it from TOMMY,, but near to BETTY again.

FAUSTINA
AHHHHHH!

FAUSTINA grabs machine back from EUGENE, but swings it near DORIS, who grabs TOMMY's beer.

EUGENE
Doris, no!

FAUSTINA
WHO'S IDEA WAS IT TO HAVE THE MACHINE AROUND ALL THIS BEER?

EUGENE grabs machine from FAUSTINA again, puts it down in front of WENDELL.

EUGENE
Wendell, take care of this!

WENDELL
Okay.

WENDELL dutifully pour a beer on machine, short circuiting it again! FAUSTINA almost explodes.

The CAST Photos by Rog Franklin

FAUSTINA
What's wrong with you people!

WENDELL
(matter of factly)
All this time I been votin' fer folks what say they love Jesus, and things been gettin' worser and worser. Well, Jesus ain't enough! We need work!

BETTY
Them folks over there got jobs of they own - makin' McAlester pencils, them's our jobs!

FAUSTINA
Oh, god! I'm never getting out of this town! It's the Twilight Zone!

DORIS
All you got to do is keep our jobs here!

FAUSTINA
What if I can't?

WENDELL pour a little more beer on the machine, which explodes a little more.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
Aaaaahhhh! Stop! Alright! I'll do what I can! But hear me, Bluebird...I'M GOING TO GET THOSE VOTES FROM YOU!

FAUSTINA looks at them all, makes a strange, guttural sound of disgust, as her phone starts to ring. FAUSTINA exits.

EUGENE
Wendell -

WENDELL
We gotta start lookin' out for our own, Eugene! Them rich folks, they're all the time lookin' out for each other, and they got the rest of us fightin' for the scraps!

EUGENE
Fightin'... makes you strong!

WENDELL
No, fightin' just keeps you tired. Too tired to notice you might be in the wrong fight.

BETTY
Know what we need? A new hospital! Nearest doctor's down in Shockley!

DORIS
And they should re-open the nursery school!

TOMMY
What's another couple of days?

Song: "GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN"

WENDELL

NO ONE NEVER HAD TO LISTEN
TO WHAT WE HAD TO SAY,
TILL ALL OF THEM REPORTERS
CAME TO BLUEBIRD T'OTHER DAY.

TOMMY

NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO GET
WHAT WE'VE BEEN PAYIN' FOR ALL ALONG!
THERE'S NOTHIN' UN-AMERICAN
'BOUT FIXIN' WHAT'S BEEN WRONG.

TOMMY AND WENDELL

FIXIN' WHAT'S BEEN WRONG

DORIS

WE'RE LOSIN' ALL OUR JOBS,
OUR LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS,

BETTY

PEOPLE LYIN’ TO OUR FACES,
PLAYIN' US FOR FOOLS

WENDELL

WE'VE BEEN STRUGGLIN' SILENTLY,

TOMMY

PRISONERS TO OUR PRIDE,

WENDELL AND TOMMY

I SEE WHERE THIS GREAT NATION'S HEADED,

I'M NOT SATISFIED!

ALL BUT EUGENE

I'M NOT SATISFIED!

CUZ THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS!

I'M TIRED OF FOLLOWIN' THEIR RULES,

TO FIT IN WITH THEIR PLANS.

IF WE WANT OUR VOICES TO BE HEARD

IT'S TIME WE TAKE A STAND –

THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS!

TOMMY

I SIGNED UP FOR THE ARMY,

SERVED PROUDLY OVERSEAS,

TOMMY AND DORIS

AND THE RUNDOWN STREETS AND BUILDINGS

THERE LOOK SIMILAR TO THESE .

TOMMY, DORIS, AND WENDELL

WE SWORE WE'D BRING THEM FREEDOM,

KEEP THEM SAFE FROM FEAR,

BUT HOW CAN WE BRING SOMETHIN' THERE,

IF WE AIN'T GOT IT HERE?

AND WE AIN'T GOT IT HERE!

CUZ THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS

I'M TIRED OF FOLLOWIN' THEIR RULES

TO FIT IN WITH THEIR PLANS!

IF WE WANT OUR VOICES TO BE HEARD

IT'S TIME WE TAKE A STAND –

THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS!

EUGENE

Have you all lost yer minds? You can't do this!

TOMMY

(gently)

Eugene... remember... the library -

EUGENE

No –

TOMMY

Miss Rosa...

EUGENE

Stop it. –

TOMMY

We just need the money to open it again-

EUGENE

No, no, no!

A siren is heard.

DORIS

What's that?

EUGENE

You know what happens when Government is all the time helping you pull yer weight? You get weaker! You start depending on them! You expect them to be there for you –

WENDELL
(frightened)
The tornado alarm!

WENDELL exits hurriedly as sound of the tornado can be heard.. Everyone reacts to the imminent danger except EUGENE, who is too caught up in his argument and memories.

EUGENE
My Dad - always formin' committees, makin' plans - helped organize the union up to McAlesters!

TOMMY
We gotta get to the shelter!

BETTY
I gotta get to the Oldsmobile!

BETTY exits as sound of tornado grows, and the room starts to shake around them. EUGENE pulls out his father's watch, reads inscription.

EUGENE
"A hero to the workers is a hero to us all..." You know what it got him? Kicked outta the union, the factory, fer bein' a Red!

DORIS
We gotta go get Travis and Daisy!

TOMMY
Come on, Eugene! Tornado's comin'!

Sound sting, EUGENE jolts.

EUGENE
Well, I ain't no Red!

DORIS
Eugene!

TOMMY and DORIS exits as tornado becomes louder..

EUGENE
He never came back for me... But I don't need nobody's help! I ain't weak!

DORIS
(offstage)
Eugene!

EUGENE
So ya'll get to yer government built shelter, while I -

EUGENE looks around, realizes he's alone.

EUGENE(cont'd)

Where'd everybody go?

Suddenly it hits him.

TORNADO!?! AHHHHHHHHH!

EUGENE is snatched up by the tornado. (In the original production the tornado was indicated by all the panels that had indicated the bar/Main Street/Library spinning - as they had been constructed on pivots. During the spinning of the set pieces EUGENE crossed the stage screaming, while spinning a puppet version of himself on a tall pole.

EUGENE (cont'd)

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!

EUGENE exits.

The tornado settles down - however all the panels of the broken down Bluebird Main Street having been replaced with panels in which Main Street is in great shape. The walls are not crumbling, the streets and sidewalks are not cracked.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as DORIS, Lizzie Calogero as BETTY, Bob Ernst as EUGENE, Noah Butler as WENDELL, Adrian Mejia as TOMMY

The CAST..... Photos by Rog Franklin

SCENE 8

ON MAIN STREET.

A loud mechanical sound – like a the gears of an enormous clock – and over the empty main street a bright, smily-faced Sun slowly rises - only now it is red. It comes to a stop at its apex with a loud "DING!"

The MAYOR enters. He is slightly rumpled, but not panicked. (In the original production the costumes of all the townsfolk in this scene except EUGENE's were tinged red.)

MAYOR
All clear! All clear! Everybody okay? Come on out now, twister's gone! It's off over yonder -

DORIS enters.

DORIS
Hey! That was close! Tornado
almost flattened the town!

An loud impact is heard.

MAYOR
What the heck was that?

DORIS
Sounds like somethin'
hit the ground!

EUGENE enters, dazed.

EUGENE
Robert! What happened? I was inside the Touchdown when the twister hit -

DORIS
Musta sucked you right out!

MAYOR
Look at the roof - it got split!

EUGENE
Where's Travis and Daisy?

DORIS
Daycare and school -
where else would they be?

EUGENE
Musta hit my head...

DORIS
Thrown all that way -

MAYOR
Lucky you ain't dead!

EUGENE
Cut that out!

MAYOR
Cut what out?

EUGENE
You keep making a rhyme.

MAYOR
I do? Hmmmmm...whoa, look at the time!
Almost time for the unveiling!

DORIS
I'll take care of Eugene!

MAYOR
This statue's gonna be the best thing
this town's ever seen!

MAYOR exits.

EUGENE
Unveiling? What statue? What're you talkin' about!

DORIS
Must have hit your head hard -

MAYOR re-enters.

MAYOR
And you don't have to shout!

MAYOR exits.

DORIS
Should I get Doc Jensen? You took quite a blow -

EUGENE
What are you talkin' 'bout, Doris? Doc left town years ago!

DORIS
He's over in the hospital - Betty saw him yesterday.

EUGENE
Betty can't afford no hospital!

DORIS
'Course she can't! She let the National Health Care pay.
Now I know what this is - you're nervous. Making a speech is kinda scary-

EUGENE
I'm making a speech? Where?

DORIS
Right here, in front of -

EUGENE
The Liberry!
It's open!

DORIS
Course it's open!

EUGENE
It sure looks pretty!

TOMMY enters.

TOMMY
Sure does - The Public Library of Ruby City!

EUGENE
Ruby City? But this is all crazy it just can't be true!
The Liberry's open! The hospital, too!
The factory's pumping out pencils galore!
The granary's open, and the high school next door!

MAYOR and BETTY enter.

TOMMY
Our tax dollars at work. Just the way it should be.

EUGENE
But it's socialism! It ain't right! Can't you all see!

MAYOR
Got hit on the Head -

DORIS
Should be in bed -

EUGENE
Stop rhyming!

MAYOR
Stop rhyming?

EUGENE
That's what I said!
(realizing he's doing it too) Arrrggg!

ROSA
(offstage)
Eugene!

MAYOR
Now, you better get ready! Biggest day in your life!

EUGENE
That voice... it can't be! It sounds like -

BETTY
Your wife!

MISS ROSA enters.

EUGENE
My – ? Miss Rosa! I... I thought you were gone!

ROSA
Well, I had to put my best dress on!

EUGENE
Miss Rosa... I -

ROSA
I love you, too. Here is your speech, now go make me proud.
And make sure to wave to our kids in the crowd!

ROSA has handed EUGENE a slip of paper.

EUGENE
I don't understand what is - WE HAVE KIDS?

EUGENE, deeply confused, stands next to ROSA as he watches as a podium is brought on. The MAYOR steps behind it as the citizens applaud.

MAYOR
Citizens of Ruby City –
Today we dedicate this monument
to a man of honor, and a life well spent.
He organized our factory, helped collectivize our land,
and whenever there was someone in need he'd always lend a hand.
No fight was too big, no cause was too small -
he was a hero to the workers, and a hero to us all.

EUGENE recognizes that phrase

EUGENE
What..?

MAYOR
We lost a great man when he passed away,
but to unveil his statue we have his son with us today!

EUGENE
(stunned)
My... father?

MAYOR
Eugene?

ROSA
That's your cue! Go on and speak!

EUGENE
What do I say?

ROSA
How about the speech you've been working on all week!

The MAYOR gives way at the podium as ROSA gently guides EUGENE behind it. Baffled and nervous EUGENE starts to read the paper ROSA handed him.

EUGENE
Ladies and Gentlemen - my dad left Ruby City,
a town he loved and served,
to help other workers
get the right's they deserved.
Sharecroppers, mill workers,
in factories and fields,
he was the kind of guy who wouldn't stop
'till his hard work yields
the results that he wanted,
and he fought 'till his last
to make sure the wealth of this country
benefitted the Working Class!
He was... killed... coming back
from a strike they had won.
He and his wife,
coming back for... their son.
That boy was me,
Eugene Salinsky.
And my mom and dad
meant the world to me.
Last time I saw him
he hugged me and said
"I love you, Eugene,
and I'm glad you're a..."

EUGENE is overcome with emotion realizing he'd been wrong about his parents all along.

EUGENE
They… didn't abandon me...

Everyone looks up over the audience, as if witnessing the unveiling of the statue. All but EUGENE clap. DORIS, TOMMY and BETTY exit.

MAYOR

It's a beautiful statue.

MAYOR exits.

EUGENE

I didn't know...

ROSA

Now, hurry up! Speech is over, and we gotta go!

EUGENE

Where are we going?

ROSA

Don't tell me you forgot so soon
your promise to take me on a second honeymoon!

Smiling, EUGENE has now totally given himself over to Ruby City. He is happy, his heart is open, and he's ready for a new life.

EUGENE

Where do you want to go, Rosa? Athens? Aruba?

ROSA

I liked the hotel you picked the first time -

EUGENE

Where?

ROSA

In Cuba!

MAYOR re-enters.

MAYOR

Twister's a'comin'!

EUGENE

I thought it already passed!

MAYOR

This here is a new one! Bigger than the last!

MAYOR, ROSA, and EUGENE start to go.

MAYOR (cont'd)

Get to the shelter!

Velina Brown as ROSA, Bob Ernst as EUGENE Photo by Rog Franklin

The set has begun to shake spin in the reverse direction of before, and the wind of the tornado pulls EUGENE away from ROSA.

ROSA

Eugene! Don't let go!

EUGENE

It's pulling me, Rosa!
I can't hold on!

ROSA

No!

The tornado pulls EUGENE away from ROSA and RUBY city. EUGENE clutches to the edge of town.

EUGENE
(with passionate truth to ROSA)

I... I... I just want to tell you - I've loved you all my life,
I'm proud to be red, and have you as a my wife!

EUGENE is swept off by the tornado, as the MAYOR and ROSA exit the other way. As the panels spin again EUGENE crosses the stage in the opposite direction of before, again screaming and spinning a puppet version of himself aloft on a stick.

EUGENE (cont'd)

Roooooosssaaaaaa!

EUGENE exits.

The tornado settles down All the panels of the repaired Bluebird Main Street have been replaced with wrecked version on the interior of the Touchdown Bar..

SCENE 9

IN THE TOUCHDOWN BAR.

The bar has been wrecked.

The MAYOR, returned to his Bluebird self and costume like everyone else, enter, disheveled.

MAYOR
All clear! All clear! Everybody okay?

DORIS enters, with baby, dialing phone.

MAYOR (cont'd)
Doris? You alright? Where's Daisy?

DORIS
I don't know! I left her with Sophie before the storm hit! The lines dead!

DORIS runs out. The MAYOR looks around.

MAYOR
Oh, lord! The Touchdown!

TOMMY enters.

TOMMY
Robert! It's Betty! Something's wrong with her. She ain't walkin' right!

TOMMY exits bar, returns with BETTY, who seems to walking better than ever..

BETTY
(cheerfully)
What are you talkin' about? That twister was better than a chiropractor! And a hell of a lot cheaper!

MAYOR
Where's the Oldsmobile?

BETTY
Up in that tree. Well, I better get me a ladder.

MAYOR
How're you gonna get it down?

BETTY
We ain't. Least now it's out of the way of the floods.

With a slight twist of her back a jauntily BETTY exits. TOMMY surveys the damage to the bar.

TOMMY
Ain't much left...

FAUSTINA enters.

FAUSTINA
Oh my God! That was... and it... then.... Then...! It just... This town is trying to kill me!

DORIS re-enters, with toddler.

DORIS
Daisy's safe. Sophie took her to the cellar when the tornado hit. Her house is just gone!

MaYOR
Like most of Bluebird... The factory... the street... even the sidewalk...

FAUSTINA
Wait a minute... I see where this is going –

TOMMY
Miss Page -

FAUSTINA
No! No! NO!

TOMMY
I was just going to say... I'm ready to vote.

DORIS
Tommy?

TOMMY
Ain't no Bluebird to fix up no more, Doris. Guess it just weren't meant to be.

FAUSTINA
Fabulous! NOBODY GO ANYWHERE!

FAUSTINA exits.

DORIS
When my John comes back...

TOMMY
We'll just have to let him know there ain't no here no more.

FAUSTINA enters with voting machine.

FAUSTINA
Alright! It's time for Bluebird to vote... AGAIN! Now, of course we would love all of you to vote, but even if only one of you votes it will break the electoral tie. I ONLY NEED ONE, AND I AM FREE!

TOMMY goes to machine. An loud impact is heard.

FAUSTINA*(cont'd)*
What the hell was that?

EUGENE enters, dazed.

MAYOR
Eugene! You alright?

EUGENE
I got sucked up into that twister...

TOMMY
Did ya hit yer head?

MAYOR
Lucky you ain't dead!

EUGENE reacts to... was that a rhyme?

EUGENE
What did you say?

FAUSTINA
They said it's time to vote! Let's get on with this!

EUGENE
Ya'll are votin'? Now? What about the Post Office? The school? Tommy... what about, the Liberry?

The Townsfolk are taken aback by EUGENE's change.

TOMMY
Thought you said it was all socialism anyway.

FAUSTINA
He did! I heard him! NOW GET OVER HERE AND EXERCISE YOUR FRANCHISE!

EUGENE
I seen somethin', during that twister.. It was a place, where everything was... (a la "Wizard of Oz) you were there, and you were there, and you (to FAUSTINA) you weren't there.

FAUSTINA
What are you babbling about?

EUGENE
This is wrong!

FAUSTINA
What?

EUGENE
(To Townsfolk)
I was wrong! This here is our town, in our state, in our country! And them tax dollars, them's our's, too! Taxes is just how all of us pay for stuff we can't afford by ourselves! (to FAUSTINA) But you government folks fergot that, with all yer wars and corporate bailouts! But until we get Bluebird re-built we ain't votin' fer nobody!

FAUSTINA
You...you...you think you can keep holding up the entire election? You're just a stupid little town in NEBRASKA!

DORIS
Kansas!

FAUSTINA
Oh, shut up! The country won't stand for this any longer! They already hate you! Bluebird is all ALONE -

Suddenly the bar TV pops to life.

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
Bluebird is not all alone!

FAUSTINA
What?

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
For the last few days America, the World, has watched as Bluebird, Kansas has stood alone, holding hostage the election results of an entire nation!

FAUSTINA
Well, that's over!

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
Well, that's over! After seeing brave Bluebirdians receive long overdue funding for their town, other electoral districts around the country are now de-certifying their own election results!

FAUSTINA
No...no, they can't!

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
Yes... yes they can! Louisiana, Minnesota, Iowa, Oregon... all cancelling their results, and vowing not to re-vote until they, too, get their fair share of government funding!

FAUSTINA
No!

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
Yes! Looks like this election may not be over for a looong time during this-

ANNOUNCER VOICE
CNN SPECIAL REPORT!

WINDSWEPT
(on tv)
CORNHUSKER CALAMITY!

DORIS
(correcting)
That's Nebraska!

DORIS turns off TV.

FAUSTINA
The Committee will probably make me stay here until all the votes are counted... helping you people get... things...It could be weeks, months...a school here, a highway, clean up our river, free solar panels for everyone!

EUGENE
Sounds nice.

FAUSTINA is grasping at straws, turns to her erstwhile ally..

FAUSTINA
Eugene... I knew about the rest of them, but you...it sounds so... Red!

Sound sting, EUGENE jolts.

FAUSTINA (cont'd)
Red!

Sound sting, EUGENE jolts.

FAUSTINA (cont'd)
RED!

Sound sting, EUGENE jolts, but this time he fights it off

Song: "BETTER RED THAN RIGHT"

EUGENE

IF THAT'S BEIN' RED...

YOU CAN CALL ME PINKO!

YOU CAN CALL ME COMMIE,

CALL ME CRAZY,

CALL ME ANYTHING YOU LIKE!

I'VE BEEN TO A PLACE

WHERE PEOPLE GOT THEIR SHARE.

I'M THINKIN' THINGS IN BLUEBIRD

COULD BE A LITTLE MORE LIKE THERE!

I LOOK BACK AT MY LIFE

AND SEE THAT I'VE BEEN WRONG,

FOLKS LIKE US SHOULD BE RUNNIN'

THIS HERE COUNTRY ALL A LONG!

IF THAT'S BEIN' RED,

YOU CAN CALL ME PINKO!

YOU CAN CALL ME COMMIE,

CALL ME CRAZY,

CALL ME ANYTHING YOU LIKE!

IF THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH WANTIN'

SOMETHIN' MORE OUT OF LIFE,

THEN IT'S BETTER BEIN' RED THAN BEIN' RIGHT!

EUGENE, MAYOR, TOMMY DORIS

IT'S BETTER BEIN' RED THAN BEIN' RIGHT!

During song TECHNICIAN has entered, drinking a bottle of soda.. Seeing the enthusiastic Townsfolk the TECHNICIAN is smilingly caught up in their enthusiasm.

FAUSTINA

Everybody stop singing! I NEED TO THINK... I've got it! I don't need you to vote!

TOMMY

Because you're going to help us rebuild the town?

FAUSTINA
Because I'm going to vote for you! Why didn't I think of this before? I'll just program the machine to say you voted!

MAYOR
You can't do that!

FAUSTINA
Why not? We did it in Ohio!

Starts punching numbers into pad on voting machine. FAUSTINA then quickly votes a few times.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
Nothing is going to stand between me and Washington! D.C.! YOU! (to TECHNICIAN) Get this machine! Wait... I think I'll put in a few extra votes for whoever I think will wipe this town off the map! Ha! (FAUSTINA punches in a few more votes, notices TECHNICIAN looking at her) WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT? (trying to be charming) You just keep your mouth shut, and when this is all over, you'll have a place with me, in D.C.!

FAUSTINA forces TECHNICIAN into a jerky, short, rather terrible happy dance with her.

FAUSTINA(cont'd)
That was terrible. But you'll learn... Goodbye, Bluebird! Washington, here I come!

FAUSTINA exits. The Townsfolk watch her despondently watch her go.

DORIS
Ain't there nothin' we can do? She put them votes in there!

MaYOR
She's a government official! They'll believe her...

TOMMY
Ain't nothin' we can do about it...

Defeated the EUGENE, DORIS, TOMMY, and the MAYOR FALL into despair. The baby starts to cry. The TECHNICIAN, alone at one side, watches their misery, then turns to the voting machine. TECHNICIAN crosses to machine, and lovingly strokes its keys. TECHNICIAN does a short, tragic, heartbreaking dance with machine, then -

TECHNICIAN
Ahem...

TECHNICIAN tearfully pours soda on machine, short circuiting it. Townsfolk are hopeful for a moment.

EUGENE
That won't do no good! It got fixed before.

Townsfolk are slump again. TECHNICIAN pulls out screwdriver, dramatically opens machine, and tears insides of machine out..

DORIS
Ain't nobody gonna be able to make that work again!

EUGENE
And I know there's a lot to rebuild in this town, but Tommy, this time – first thing we get is some money for-

ALL, EXCEPT EUGENE
The Library!

EUGENE
And I'm gonna find Miss Rosa, and I'm gonna bring her home!

MAYOR
(cheerfully)
Looks like Bluebird's
back on the map,

DORIS
Where we're used to taking
whatever life hands us.

TOMMY
Now we're gonna fight,
ain't takin' no crap!

EUGENE
Until we have a real Red State here, in -

AlL
Kansas!

EUGENE tags the Bluebird song on his harmonica.

End of Play

After bows:

ALL (cont'd)

Reprise:: "THE GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN"

THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN A

BOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS,

WE'RE TIRED OF FOLLOWIN' THEIR RULES

TO FIT IN WITH THEIR PLANS!

IF WE WANT OUR VOICES TO BE HEARD

IT'S TIME WE TAKE A STAND!

THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS –

THIS GOVERNMENT DON'T GIVE A DAMN

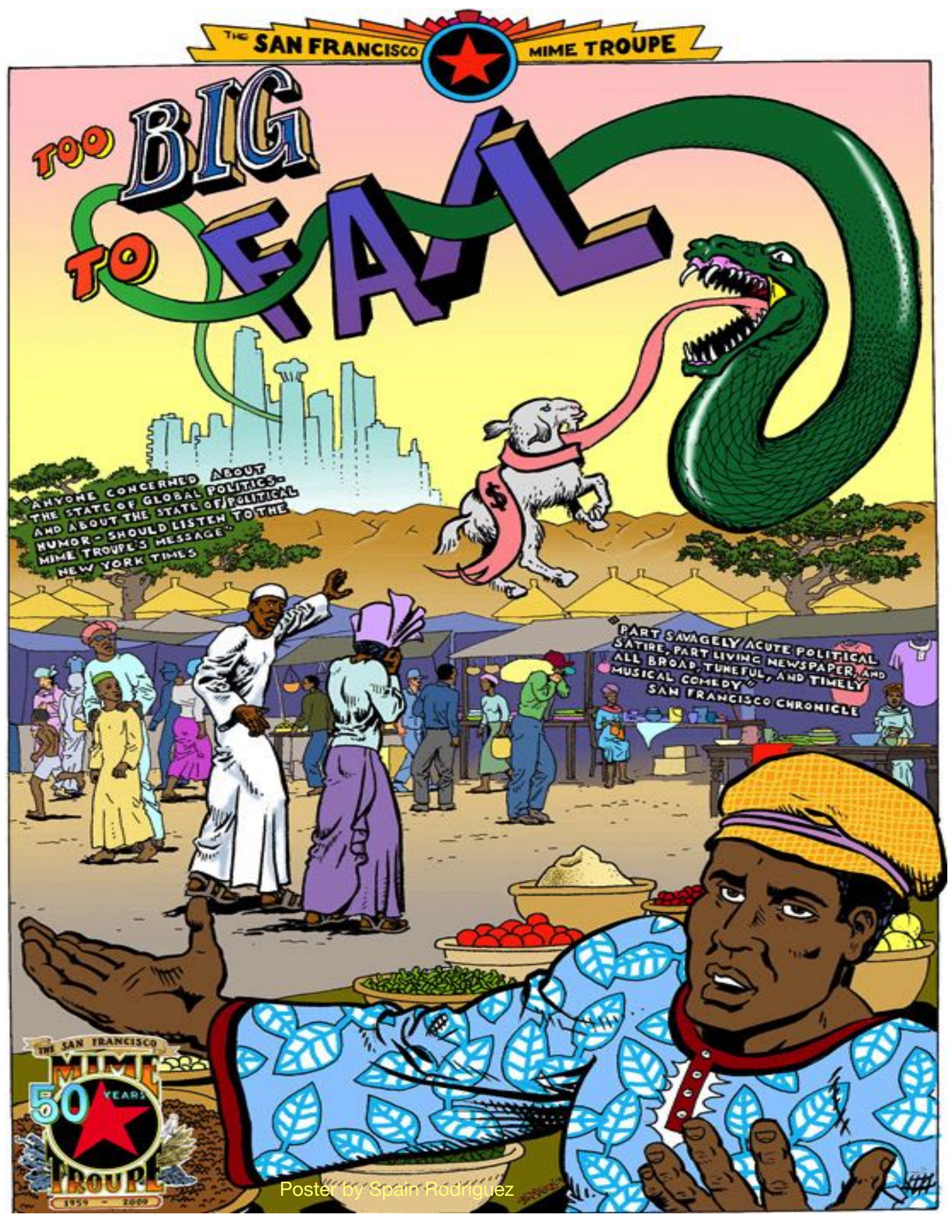
ABOUT THE WORKIN' FOLKS!

End of Play.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as DORIS, Adrian Mejia as TOMMY, Lizzie Calogero as TECHNICIAN, Noah Butler as MAYOR, Bob Ernst as EUGENE Photo by Rog Franklin

Too Big To Fail

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan
Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran


THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE
TOO BIG TO FAIL
"ANYONE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATE OF GLOBAL POLITICS AND ABOUT THE STATE OF POLITICAL HUMOR - SHOULD LISTEN TO THE MIME TROUPE'S MESSAGE"
NEW YORK TIMES
"PART SAVAGELY ACUTE POLITICAL SATIRE, PART LIVING NEWSPAPER, AND ALL BROAD, TUNEFUL, AND TIMELY MUSICAL COMEDY"
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE
50 YEARS
1959 - 2009
Poster by Spain Rodriguez

Wall Street had just burst.

Again.

Housing loan fraud, illegal banking, insurance scams, accounting crimes - actually a pretty normal year for the Ponzi-Scheme that is Wall Street. But the scheme had collapsed.

Again.

And once again under financed corporations were bailed out, while this time under financed homeowners were thrown out. The high crimes of the banks were overlooked, while the misdemeanors of the struggling workers were punished. And we were all told that the Great Institutions - whatever their failings - could not be held accountable because we needed them. They were Too Big To Fail.

Told in the style of an East African storytelling, full of magic, spells, witches, and and an epic heroes journey, “Too Big To Fail” is the story of a small village caught in a trap of greed, preyed upon by demons, where the villagers wonder what spell have they fallen under that led to this misery, and how can they get out?

“In its latest satirical musical, the intrepid San Francisco Mime Troupe poses this question: Who is more important, the king or the people?

“Too Big To Fail,” an unapologetically anti-capitalist comedy framed as an African folk tale, pits the “king” — and other money-grubbing meanies and their minions — against a bunch of foolish and greedy villagers, cannibalistic fish and other metaphorical victims of megacorporations that are, yes, too big to fail. By show’s end, the answer to the king-or-people conundrum is clear, and sure, you can guess what it is.”
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

“Would you like to hear a story?” the suddenly materialized griot calls out in a hearty West African accent. It’s an invitation that the July 4 crowd, stretching in their hundreds over a sunny sweep of San Francisco’s Dolores Park, has no intention of refusing. They answer the man on the small outdoor stage with gusto— this is their independence day from the multiplex, the boob tube, the boss, Wall Street and Washington, D.C. And with a cheer, the San Francisco Mime Troupe’s 50th anniversary season is underway…Too Big to Fail… winks at such varied cultural referents as The Wizard of Oz, Jason and the Argonauts and The Lion King, and confronts the brutality of the financial system and the present crisis with sharp and subversive laughter. Set over percolating African-inflected grooves and five biting songs, it looks to bring its audience back to basics… “Who is more important, the king or the people?”
AMERICAN THEATRE MAGAZINE

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Storyteller
Boy
Lion
Monkey
Chief
Bamusa
Filije
Jeneeba
Old Woman
First Privateer
Second Privateer
Third Privateer
Demon
Kuta
Fish-
    Carly
    Phil
The Big Fish
Man/Kodo
Personal Assistants
Soulless Souls

TOO BIG TO FAIL opened July 4th, 2009 in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Wilma Bonet, with the following cast:

Storyteller, Second Privateer.....Michael Gene Sullivan*
Boy, Bamusa, Demon, Kuta.....Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Lion, Chief, Second Privateer, Phil, Kodo.....Ed Holmes*
Monkey, Filije.....Adrain Mejia
Jeneeba, Big Fish.....Velina Brown*
Old Woman, First Privateer, Carly.....B.W. Gonzalez*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

PROLOGUE

"THE BOY, AND THE LION"

An African drum sound in the distance, with a rhythm repeated by the band. After a moment the STORYTELLER, a griot, enters. He is wearing flowing robes, and has a small "talking drum," which he uses to accentuate his stories. He dances his way to the stage – which is designed to look like a storybook West African village - and with a flourish finishes the entrance music.

STORYTELLER
(to the audience)
Kenton diro! Good afternoon! (or evening)

There is not enough audience response for his liking.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
I said, good afternoon!

There is more response.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
That is more like it! How are you doing today? That is good! And it is good that you are all out, sharing this beautiful day with each other. Now... would you like to hear a story?

Still not enough audience response.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
I said WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR A STORY?

Bigger response.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
That is more like it! There once was a boy...

A BOY, dressed in traditional west African clothes, enters, with a small shovel.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Who had to dig a well...

BOY opens a trapdoor in the stage, begins to "dig". (At each mention of depth the BOY goes deeper into the hole.)

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
When he had dug as deep as his knees he found - ah! A gold coin!

BOY pulls a coin out of hole.

BOY
(gleefully)
"A gold coin!"

STORYTELLER
Maybe there is treasure down here, he thought to himself. If I keep digging, perhaps I'll find more!" So he kept digging...

Anxiously, BOY continues digging

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
When he was as deep as his shoulders he found -ah! Two coins!

The BOY holds up two coins.

BOY
(excitedly)
"I was right,"

STORYTELLER
Said the boy,

BOY
"There is treasure down here!"

STORYTELLER
And so he kept on digging.

BOY resumes digging.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
And when he was deep as his head - ah! Three gold coins!

The BOY holds up three coins.

BOY
"The deeper I dig," thought the boy, "the richer I will be!"

STORYTELLER
And so he kept digging - deeper and deeper and deeper...

BOY disappears down trap. The STORYTELLER crosses to trapdoor, looks down. Pause.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
And that was the last time anyone saw the boy. Eventually the people covered the hole of the well. They did not want anyone else to fall into that bottomless pit.

STORYTELLER closes hole, looks at audience.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Would you like to hear another story?

AUDIENCE moans

Michael Gene Sullivan as THE STORYTELLER Photo by Pax Ahimsa

Lisa Hori-Garcia as THE BOY
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

Ed Holmes as LION
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Don't be so quiet! I know times are difficult, but never let your spirit get dragged down, no matter how bad things get... remember: we are all in this together, and together is how we will get out! (An idea strikes.) Ahhhh... Once upon a time there was a terrible drought, and Lion called all the animals together...

A masked actor, LION, enters on one side of the stage as another masked actor, MONKEY, enters on the other.

LION
"As your king,"

STORYTELLER
Lion said,

LION
"I must tell you there is not enough food for all of us."

STORYTELLER
And all the animals said, "Save us! For we cannot save ourselves." Come on, everybody:

STORYTELLER gets audience and MONKEY to repeat line.

STORYTELLER, AUDIENCE AND MONKEY
"Save us, for we cannot save ourselves!"

LION
(haughtily)
"Very well," said Lion. "I will come up with a plan. But to think clearly I must eat everyday. If I am to think of a way to save you I cannot be hungry."

As the STORYTELLER continues an actors masked as an, ANTELOPE and a GAZELLE, enter with a platters of food, pitchers of drink, and a large steak - all of which the lion eats.

STORYTELLER
So each day one of the animals was fed to Lion - who was thinking hard! Elephant, zebra, water buffalo... each day one was fed to Lion, who was soon as big as a mountain, as he tried to come up with a plan to feed all the animals. "Save us, for we cannot save ourselves!

STORYTELLER gets the audience to repeat.

STORYTELLER, AUDIENCE AND MONKEY
"Save us, for we cannot save ourselves!"

STORYTELLER
But one day it was Monkey's turn to be fed to Lion -

GAZELLE and ANTELOPE lead MONKEY to LION, who grabs MONKEY and prepares to feast.

MONKEY
(thinking quickly)
"Before you eat me,"

STORYTELLER
Said Monkey,

MONKEY
"May I say a few last words to everyone?"

LION
"Go ahead, but don't take too long. I must not be hungry if I am going to save my people."

STORYTELLER, AUDIENCE
"Save us, for we cannot save ourselves!"

MONKEY
(to audience)
"My friends," said Monkey, "I know you are all hungry, and we are all waiting for Lion to tell us his plan. Though I am but a humble Monkey I think I know where there is enough food to feed us all!"

LION
"Where?"

STORYTELLER
Asked Lion.

MONKEY
"Right... there!"

STORYTELLER
And he pointed straight at Lion - who you will remember was now big as a mountain!

LION
"But... but you can't eat me! I must live so that I can save you, for you cannot save yourselves."

MONKEY
"Is it more important that the leader lives to save the People,"

STORYTELLER
Asked Monkey,

MONKEY
"Or that the People actually survive? Who is more important, the King, or the People?

STORYTELLER and MONKEY turn to audience, who say:

AUDIENCE

The People!

MONKEY

So, shall we eat the King?"

MONKEY pulls out a cleaver.

AUDIENCE

Yes!

LION runs off with MONKEY chasing him.

STORYTELLER

And with that the animals killed Lion, shared the meat, used the bones to fertilized the land and raise crops, and they all had enough until the drought was over! Oh, I forget to tell you the name of the Lion: Citibank. A strange name for a lion, I know. But there you have it.

You see, both the Boy and the Lion had the same problem, and that is what happens when your Soto Do takes over. Soto do... You don't know what a Soto Do is? Well, it's inside of you... every person has one. Some say it here –

STORYTELLER touches his head.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)

– or here. –

STORYTELLER touches his stomach.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)

Some say it is on the back of your heart. You've never heard of a Soto Do? Who are you people? Well, I don't know how to say it in your tongue... but I could explain it... in a story! Would you like to hear one more story?

AUDIENCE

Yes!

STORYTELLER

That's more like it! Imagine... a wedding!

The Cast of Too Big Too Fail Photo by Pax Ahimsa

Velina Brown as JENEEBA, Adrian Mejia as FILIJI, Lisa Hori-Garcia as BAMUSA Photo by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 1

A WEDDING IN THE VILLAGE

With a grand gesture the STORYTELLER starts the music of the wedding dance, and the VILLAGERS enter dancing. Among them are the CHIEF, the bride, JENEEBA, and groom, FILIJE.

STORYTELLER
It was the wedding of Filije and Jeneeba, and everyone in the village was celebrating!

All dance. FILIJE and JENEEBA, who are clearly in love, dance for each other and the rest of the village.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Filije was a fine, brave man - perhaps a little impatient, but that is not always a bad thing. And his bride, Jeneeba, was wise as she was beautiful... for she was the daughter of The Chief!

CHIEF
(prodding)
The handsome Chief...?

STORYTELLER
Sorry - the handsome Chief.

CHIEF
(to JENEEBA and FILIJE)
Blessings on you both!

STORYTELLER
Said the handsome Chief.

CHIEF
In honor of your marriage, and because I love you both so much, I have decided to give, as a dowry, my finest goat!

CHIEF reaches offstage, grabs a leash and pulls a goat - BAMUSA - onstage..

STORYTELLER
Oooooh! Bamusa the goat was known throughout the valley for the sweetest of milk, and the sweetest of disposition - which in a goat is no small thing.

BAMUSA
(sweetly)
Baaaah!

The CHIEF tries to hand the leash to FILIJE.

FILIJE
Oh, great Chief –

CHIEF

Handsome –

FILIJE

Oh great, handsome Chief, you have already given me the greatest gift anyone could ask - the beautiful Jeneeba. I cannot ask for anything else.

JENEEBA

(smiling, but...)

Filije, what are you doing? Take the goat.

FILIJE

(smiling)

We don't want a goat.

JENEEBA

Yes, we do.

FILIJE

Jeneeba, I want to give you more then just one goat.

JENEEBA

But with a goat we could sell the milk and cheese, and in a year we would have enough money to buy some land, start our family...

FILIJE

I love you too much to wait a year to make you happy! You deserve more. Trust me, wife - I am a married man now, I will come up with something.

JENEEBA

(to CHIEF)

We'll take the goat.

JENEEBA takes goat leash from CHIEF.

FILIJE

No, I have made up my mind.

FILIJE takes leash out of her hands.

STORYTELLER

Filije, like most brave men, was a little stubborn...

JENEEBA puts her hand on the leash.

JENEEBA

What mind?

STORYTELLER

And Jeneeba, like many wise and beautiful women, was a little annoying.

FILIJE and JENEEBA, each thinking they have won the argument, smile at each other.

FILIJE

Fine.

JENEEBA

Good.

FILIJE

Fine.

JENEEBA

Good.

BAMUSA

Baaah.

An OLD WOMAN steps out of the crowd. She wearing the hodgepodge of a traveling witch woman.

OLD WOMAN

I have a gift! I have a gift for the new couple!

STORYTELLER

It was an Old Woman! She was not from the village, and no one had seen her before...

CHIEF

What is your gift?

STORYTELLER

Said the Chief -

FILIJE

The handsome Chief.

CHIEF

(to FILIJE)

Thank you.

OLD WOMAN

A gift that will help you young people
Acquire
Everything that you
Desire!
It is... a magic spell!

The VILLAGERS are taken aback.

CHIEF

Magic?!?

OLD WOMAN

A special kind of magic,

(to FILIJE and JENEEBA)

You'll be the richest couple in
Town!
You can buy a whole herd of goats -
With no money down!
My spell can make your
Wish come true -

FIlIJE

Why would you do that?

OLD WOMAN

Because that's what I do!
This spell makes you wealthy as soon as I've
Said it,
The best magic in the world - it's the magic of...
Credit!

VILLAGERS

Credit?

OLD WOMAN

Low, low monthly payments -
Payments you can afford.
You can get a new goat,
Get your wife a new gourd!

FILIJE

(interested)

Credit!

JENEEBA

(laughing)

A magic spell to make us rich? Oh, please!

STORYTELLER

Jeneeba was also known for, how you say, pooping on everyone's party.

JENEEBA

No one just suddenly has money!

The OLD WOMAN exits.

FILIJE

Not if you're willing to wait a whole year!

JENEEBA

Filije, if you really want something, it is worth waiting for.

CHIEF
She is right my son. Trust me, just say she is right - it will make things a lot easier. Now both of you go off to your hut, and start making me some grandchildren!

STORYTELLER
Handsome grandchildren!

CHIEF
Thank you!

CHIEF exits.

JENEEBA
Come on, Bamusa.

BAMUSA
Baaah!

JENEEBA
(Seductively)
I will be waiting for you in our new home, husband...

JENEEBA leaves, with BAMUSA.

FIlIJE
(to himself)
What is so wrong with wanting enough to live a good life?

OLD WOMAN suddenly reappears.

OLD WOMAN
You want the good life... is that what you
Said?
Big house, lots to eat, a nice, comfy
Bed –

FILIJE
Yes...

OLD WOMAN
Do you want to live rich? Your dreams come
True today?

FILIJE nods vigorously, and OLD WOMAN pulls out a scroll contract. which she before FILIJE.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
(enticingly)
Zero down! Easy terms! No interest 'till
May!
Provided, Of course, each month you can

Pay
The smallest of payments. Hurry! Offer ends
Today!

Song, "CREDIT":

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

SOME MEN CHOOSE TO SPEND THEIR WHOLE LIVES
WORRYING AND SAVING,
THEY MAY NEVER GAIN ENOUGH
TO GET THE THINGS THAT THEY ARE CRAVING.

WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING!
YOU CAN PLAN FOREVER NEVER LEARNING
A THING,
LIFE CAN BE SO CAREFREE AND PLEASANT,
WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE PRESENT.

SOME MEN WERE MEANT TO LEAD A SIMPLE LIFE,
SOME WERE SENT FOR SOMETHING GREATER .
WHEN GIVEN CHANCES TO SECURE YOUR FINANCES
ONE SHOULDN'T WAIT EVEN SECONDS LATER –

OLD WOMAN AND FILIJE

WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING,
YOU CAN PLAN FOREVER NEVER LEARNING
A THING,
LIFE CAN BE SO CAREFREE AND PLEASANT
WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE PRESENT .

STORYTELLER

Filije thought about it -

Without a pause

FILIJE

I'll do it!

STORYTELLER

(warningly)

He thought long and hard about what the Old Woman said -

FILIJE

Where do I sign?

FILIJE (CONT'D)

USED TO BE A TIME WHEN THE THINGS I COULD BUY

RELIED UPON THE WAGE I WAS MAKING.

BUT WITH ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENTS,

AND MAGICAL ENCHANTMENTS,

EVERYTHING I WANT WILL BE MINE

FOR THE TAKING!

STORYTELLER

He thought about what Jeneeba would say -

FILIJE

EVEN A POOR MAN CAN LIVE LIKE A KING

WITHOUT A COIN TO YOUR NAME

YOU CAN BUY MOST ANYTHING!

FILIJE enthusiastically joins OLD WOMAN in her celebratory invocation dance.

OLD WOMAN FILIJE

CREDIT –

FINE CLOTHES!

CREDIT –

NEW CAR!

CREDIT –

BIG HOUSE!

CREDIT –

FLAT SCREEN!

CREDIT –

LAP TOP!

CREDIT –

iPHONE!

CREDIT –

NIKES!

CREDIT –

BLING BLING!

CREDIT –

SILK SHEETS!

CREDIT –

BLUE RAY!

CREDIT –

BOTOX!

OLD WOMAN AND FILIJE

CREDIT –

CREDIT…

OLD WOMAN

Sign!

OLD WOMAN produces a large quill pen.

FILIJE

Where?

OLD WOMAN

Here... here...
Here...
And once more on the
Rear!

FILIJE signs the contract.

FILIJE

Jeneeba will be so happy!

In another part of the stage JENEEBA enters she and FILIJE's hut with BAMUSA. She is waiting for FILIJE to come home.

FILIJE (CONT'D)
When can I have the money?

OLD WOMAN
Just one more thing before I cast the
Spell...

FILIJE
Something else?

OLD WOMAN
A formality -

FILIJE
What is it?

OLD WOMAN

Well...
In order to make the spell work just
Right,
You must bring me something of value, and bring it
Tonight!
We call it collateral, and it must be worth
Just as much
As whatever the credit is for -
Just as much!
A House for a house, a boat for a
Boat,
A cow for a cow, A goat -

FILIJE
For a goat! I'll be right back! Don't go anywhere!

FILIJE exits, leaving the OLD WOMAN cackling with glee.

Adrian Mejia as FILIJI, BW Gonzalez as OLD WOMAN Photo by Pax Ahimsa

INTERLUDE

INSIDE THE HUT

STORYTELLER

So Filije left the Old Woman and stole back into his hut where Jeneeba lay sleeping. Nearby Bamusa the goat quietly ate Filije's spare pants.

FILIJE enters the hut to find Jeneeba has fallen asleep. FILIJE rescues his spare pants from BAMUSA, and carefully takes BAMUSA from near JENEEBA. In her sleep, JENEEBA shifts, and head rests on FILIJE's shoulder. For a moment there is a pause, and all three in the hut take a deep breath together, and sign contentedly. But then FILIJE eases JENEEBA's head down to her pillow, and exits hut with BAMUSA.

SCENE 2

FILIJE CLOSES THE DEAL.

FILIJE re-enters village square with BAMUSA.

FILIJE
I have it! I have it here! Here is the collateral goat!

FILIJE gives the OLD WOMAN the leash, and she ties BAMUSA to a tree.

OLD WOMAN
Good, good...and now, and now the
Incantation:

OLD WOMAN begins a slow, magical dance around FILIJE.

Debtus... Eternicus...
Amortization!

A gong sounds. JENEEBA, in the hut, wakes up.

JENEEBA
Filije?

JENEEBA leaves the hut.

FILIJE
That's it?

OLD WOMAN
That's the spell!

FILIJE
And the magic - it's
Mine?

OLD WOMAN
You now have a credit line of nineteen ninety -
Nine!

The OLD WOMAN gives FILIJE a handful of coins as JENEEBA enters.

JENEEBA
What is going on here? Filije?

FilIJE
Jeneeba! We're rich!
Now we have money, we can buy another
Goat!
We can start a big family, we don't have to...
Float! No, wait...

Goat,
Boat,
Coat...

JENEEBA
Why are you talking like that?

FILIJE
Sore throat,
Antidote -?

OLD WOMAN
Not as easy as it looks, is it?

FIlIJE
The point is we don't have to wait to have children! Look! Now we can start our family!

OLD WOMAN
Hold on... just a second, slow down, if you
Please.
Before you go spending there are a few small
Fees.
Some charges, disbursements, a few
Legalities...

FILIJE
But... you didn't say I had to pay for the spell!

JENEEBA
(shocked)
A spell?

FILIJE
(to OLD WOMAN)
I thought it was free!

OLD WOMAN
It is the responsibility of the customer to read the smallest of
Print,
And the quotes around "free" should have been a
Big hint!
(with each of the following fees the OLD WOMAN takes some of the money from FILIJE)
There's the service charge,
Start up costs,
Closing costs,
Then -
Filing fees,
Holding fees,
The use of the pen,

Surtaxable charges,
Secured credit Fees -

FILIJE
Stop! There's... there's only... three gold coins left.

A gong sounds again.

JENEEBA
What is that?

OLD WOMAN
Time for the first payment! 20 gold coins,
Please.

FILIJE
First payment? Already?

OLD WOMAN
It's in the contract:
"Interest and payment schedules can be changed and set
Anytime by the company that holds this debt."

The OLD WOMAN unties BAMUSA, begins to lead her away as JENEEBA stares with disbelief at FILIJE.

JENEEBA
You signed a contract?

BAMUSA
Baaaah!

FILIJE
Where's Bamusa?

FILIJE looks to where BAMUSA was tied up. At another part of the stage the OLD WOMAN cackles.

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
I suppose you've all guessed.
They missed their first payment, so -

OLD WOMAN
She's been Repossessed!

FILIJE and JENEEBA enter just in time to see The OLD WOMAN gesture, and makes BAMUSA disappear.

BAMUSA
Baaaah!

JENEEBA AND FILIJE

Bamusaaaaa!

JENEEBA
(outraged)
You signed away our goat? You idiot! What's next - are you going to trade our hut for magic beans?

FIlIJE
(to OLD WOMAN)
You have stolen our goat!

OLD WOMAN
You're the one who signed the contract!
If you can't pay - it's your
Crime!
This is what I get for lending
to people who are ...
Sub-prime!

JENEEBA
Filije!

JENEEBA id staring daggers at FILIJE, who turns to the OLD WOMAN.

FiLIJE
How can we get our goat back?

OLD WOMAN
You want her back? Call our customer service, any time,
Here's our card.
Better yet, visit our home office,
It shouldn't be hard!

The OLD WOMAN pulls FILIJE close as she tells him of the treacherous odyssey he must undertake.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
First you must journey to a town by
The sea,
There is a town gripped by profit, by
The Bourgeoisie
And ruled by a demon, who casts
A mighty spell
You'll think you're walking in heaven,
But you'll be running through
Hell!

Survive that - in the sea, another
Demon who devours
Everything around her with her

Incorporating Powers!

And if you make it that far, Filije, if you
Do Not fall,
Then you'll meet the mightiest
Demon of all!
Kodo the Great!
And he will certainly
Crush you, and take your
Last ounce of equity!

Give up now, Filije, stay home!
This is last warning you'll get,
Resign yourself to living and
Dying in debt!

The OLD WOMAN cackles, and magically disappears! FILIJE turns to JENEEBA, who is clearly beside herself with shock and outrage and her new husbands's gullibility.

FILIJE

Well -

JENEEBA
(cutting him off)

Don't even talk to me! What were you thinking?

FILIJE

I -

JENEEBA
(cutting him off)

I don't want to hear it! How could you do this?

FILIJE

We -

JENEEBA
(cutting him off)

Ah!

JENEEBA and FILIJE exit.

STORYTELLER

Problems...

JENEEBA and FILIJE enter their hut.

JENEEBA

I should have married the goat! From her, at least, I can get some milk!

FILIJE
I did it for us! I thought, if we had two goats we could start a family-

JENEEBA
Well now we don't even have one! And she was my dowry, so if she's gone it means... we are not...

JENEEBA and FILIJE look at each other, nervously.

FILIJE
(reaching out to her)
Jeneeba -

JENEEBA
Ah! Don't touch me! I don't even know if you are my husband anymore...

FILIJE
Don't be ridiculous!

JENEEBA
You're calling me ridiculous, Mister "Signs a contract without reading it!" Well, until my dowry goat is returned I am a single woman!

FILIJE
Jeneeba -

JENEEBA
Miss Jeneeba!

FILIJE
Fine! I'll get the goat back!

JENEEBA
Good!

FILIJE
I will cross the land, I will fight these demons, I will defeat the great Kodo, and I will cancel our debt!

FILIJE starts to exit.

JENEEBA
You're not talking a coat?

FILIJE
I don't need a coat!

JENEEBA
Have you ever battled demons before?

FILIJE
No...

JENEEBA

What are you packing?

FILIJE

Well, I was just going to...

JENEEBA
(exasperated)

Men!

JENEEBA forces a shoulder bag over FILIJE's head and arm, then begins handing him items.

JENEEBA (CONT'D)

Take this...

FILIJE

Nail clippers?

JENEEBA

With a nail cleaning attachment.

FILIJE

Why would I needs this?

JENEEBA

You can never tell! And this...

JENEBA hands him a package. FILIJE smells it and recoils.

FILIJE

What is this?

JENEEBA

My father's cheese. You might get hungry.

FILIJE

I will never get that hungry!

JENEEBA starts to put a coat on FILIJE.

FILIJE (CONT'D)

I told you I don't need a coat!

FILIJE disentangles himself from the coat, takes the bag, and turns to get a goodbye kiss. JENEEBA ignores him.. A hug? Nothing. Frustrated, FILIJE begins to leave again.

JENEEBA

Wait! What about the old woman? She is still in the village!

FILIJE

I can't do everything!

JENEEBA

You're telling me.

FILIJE

You know so much, you tell them about the her! And while you're at it you can tell them all about how the husband that you can't even milk went of to fight demons... without a coat!

JENEEBA

I will!

FILIJE storms out.

FILIJE

Fine!

JENEEBA

Good!

FILIJE

Fine!

JENEEBA

Good!

JENEEBA stays in the hut, as FILIJE comes to the village square. They have their backs to each other. The STORYTELLER stops FILIJE.

THE STORY OF THE JACKAL AND HIS WIFE

The STORYTELLER speaks to FILIJE. JENEEBA, and the audience as he acts out his tale.

SORRYTELLER

Once upon a time there was a Jackal and his wife, living in the desert. One day Python came into their home. Jackal said to his wife "Come, wife, come! We must grab his head! It is the best was to kill him!" So both jackals grabbed Python's head, but Python hit them with it's tail and sent them flying. Then the wife said "Come husband, come! We must grab him by the tail so we can drag him out side and drop him over the cliff!" So both jackals grabbed Python by the tail - but the snake snapped at them with it's jaws and sent them flying. "That was foolish," said the Jackal, "I will grab him by the head again!" which he did. "That is foolish," said the wife, "I will grab him by the tail!" which she did. And this time Python, held between the two Jackals, could do nothing, and was killed and dropped over the cliff. "You see," said the Jackal, "my way was best!" Don't be silly," said his wife, "my plan worked perfectly!" Since that day each one has always thought they knew the best way to solve any problem.

STORYTELLER looks to JENEEBA, who waves him off, and to FILIJE, who angrily laughs, and exits

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)

And as you know, it was Jackals that taught humans about marriage.

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SCENE 3

FILIJI AND THE DEMONS OF NAFA

STORYTELLER
And so Filije began his journey!

FILIJE enters, acting out the journey as the STORYTELLER tells it.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Day and night he traveled... over high mountains, through thick jungles, across burning deserts - and all the while Jeneeba's voice was in his ear -

JENEEBA enters, as if in FILIJE's mind.

JENEEBA
Why don't you just stop and ask for directions?

FILIJE
I don't need directions!

JENEEBA
Do you have a map?

FILIJE
I'm -

JENEEBA
And you didn't even bring a coat!

FILIJE
I don't need a coat!

STORYTELLER
Finally he came to a village by the Sea.

FILIJE
And I'm not lost!

FIRST PRIVATEER enters. The PRIVATEERS are all dressed in faded, shredded business suits, and wearing bulky, green-tinted glasses.

FIRST PRIVATEER
Who are you talking to?

FILIJE
No one!

JENEEBA
Ask him!

FILIJE

I'm not lost...

STORYTELLER

Ask him!

STORYTELLER throws up his hands, exits.

FILIJE

Excuse me. Not that I'm lost or anything but – where am I?

FIRST PRIVATEER

(proudly)

This is the village of Nafa, gateway to the Sea!

FILIJE

Just as the Old Woman said. *(to JENEEBA)* I told you I didn't need a map!

JENEEBA

Well, you still need a coat!

JENEEBA exits.

FIRST PRIVATEER

Welcome!

There is an impressive musical fanfare.

FILIJE

Thank you.

FIRST PRIVATEER holds out hand.

FIRST PRIVATEER

That will be one gold coin.

FILIJE

What?

FIRST PRIVATEER

Welcome to Nafa!

An even more impressive musical fanfare.

FIRST PRIVATEER *(cont'd)*

(holding out hand again)

One gold coin, please.

FILIJE

A coin to enter?

FIRST PRIVATEER

No, no, no... To enter is seven-fifty. The coin is for the welcome.

FILIJE
You're charging me for a welcome?

FIRST PRIVATEER
And here-

Hands FILIJE a pair of green-tinted glasses

FIRST PRIVATEER (CONT'D)
Everyone must put these special glasses on before entering the village.

FILIJE looks through the glasses without putting them on.

FILIJE
Everything looks green! Why do I have to wear these?

FIRST PRIVATEER
It's the law!

FILIJE
Law? What kind of place is this?

Suddenly the SECOND PRIVATEER, pops out from behind a wall, also wearing shredded suit and green glasses.

SECOND PRIVATEER
Did you say "what kind of place?"

FiRST PRIVATEER
Get away!

SECOND PRIVATEER
He asked a question about the village! That's my department!

FIRST PRIVATEER
He hasn't paid me for his welcome yet! (to FILIJE) Okay! Just today! Welcome! 75 cents!

SECOND PRIVATEER
I own the answers about this village!

FILIJE
Own the answers?

SECOND PRIVATEER
What do you want to know? Answers -

SECOND PRIVATEER holds out hand
One coin each!

FIlIJE
You can't make people pay for answers?

SECOND PRIVATEER

Why not? I bought them!

FILIJE

You might as well charge them for breathing the air!

THIRD PRIVATEER pops out from behind another wall.

THIRD PRIVATEER

Did someone say air? Have you been breathing my air? One gold coin, each one of you!

The Two PRIVATEERS pay.

THIRD PRIVATEER (CONT'D)
Thank you!

FIRST PRIVATEER
You're welcome!

FIRST PRIVATEER holds out hand. THIRD PRIVATEER pays for the "welcome."

THIRD PRIVATEER
Damn! Why do I always fall for that?

SECOND PRIVATEER holds out hand. THIRD PRIVATEER pays for asking a question..

SECOND PRIVATEER
Because that's the law!

FILIJE
You can't make a profit on everything!

second PRIVATEER
My friend, anything worth having is worth owning -

FIRST PRIVATEER
And anything worth needing is worth paying for! 50 cents, and I'll through in a free "Have a nice Day!'

FIlIJE
But -

THIRD PRIVATEER
Don't you own anything?

FILIJE
I own a goat...

SECOND PRIVATEER
Well then! That goat's gotta graze somewhere, right?

FILIJE
A field.

SECOND PRIVATEER
But somebody else's goat could eat all the grass on the field, right?

FILIJE
Yes...

THIRD PRIVATEER
So what do you do?

FILIJE
Talk to them about how we can both use it, together -

FIRST PRIVATEER
Commie, commie, commie!

SECOND PRIVATEER
No, my friend – you buy the field!

THIRD PRIVATEER
And then, if they want their goats to eat, they gotta pay you!

FilIJE
What if they can't afford to pay?

SECOND PRIVATEER
Their goat starves.

FIRST PRIVATEER
And you are Goat Lord of the village!

THIRD PRIVATEER
The CEO of Goats, Unlimited!

FILIJE
But one person can't own a field everyone uses!

FIRST PRIVATEER
Really? Lemme ask you something: Why do you hate freedom?

FILIJE
Freedom?

THIRD PRIVATEER
I own a house. Is that alright with you?

FIRST PRIVATEER
Is it, freedom hater?

FIlIJE
Well, yes -

SECOND PRIVATEER
Oh, but you would deny him the freedom to own the beach behind it?

FILIJE
Well, no -

FIRST PRIVATEER
And what good is owning the beach without the ocean?

FILIJE

The ocean?

THIRD PRIVATEER

And if I own the ocean, it's only fair that I own all the information about the ocean!

FILIJE

You can't own the everything!

FIRST and SECOND PRIVATEERS begin to hum "America."

SECOND PRIVATEER

Freedom is the freedom of free people to give other people no choice but to freely pay for things that used to be free!

FILIJE

Some things are suppose to be held in common by all the people! We are supposed to share them!

The Three PRIVATEERS recoil in horror at the concept.

Adrian Mejia as FILIJI, Michael gene Sullivan, BW Gonzalez, Ed Holmes as THE PRIVATEERS
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

FIRST PRIVATEER
Don't say that word!

FILIJE
What word? People?

SECOND PRIVATEER
No, the other one!

FILIJE
Them?

THIRD PRIVATEER
Of course not! We couldn't get very far not using the word them! What would call the people who don't own anything?

FILIJE
Share?

All three PRIVATEERS recoil in fear..

SECOND PRIVATEER
That's the one!

FILIJE
You can't say share?

All the PRIVATEERs fear again.

FIRST PRIVATEER
He said it again!

THIRD PRIVATEER
It's the one law nobody owns! And if you don't stop -

A booming, cruel voice is heard from offstage.

DEMON
(offstage)
Who dares break the law?

A DEMON in a business suit enters. The PRIVATEERS quake in terror.

DEMON (CONT'D)
Who said
The word?

SECOND PRIVATEER
It was him!

THIRD PRIVATEER
He said it!

SECOND PRIVATEER
Did you hear?

DEMON
I heard!
(to FILIJE) Who are you, little man? What is your
Name?
What do you want here? What is your
Game?

FIlIJE
That's a lot of questions.... Should I charge you by the stanza?

DEMON
Don't mock, me, boy! In this land
I am King!
I've desocialized, uncommunized, and privatized
Everything!

FILIJE
You're the demon...

DEMON
Demon?
(DEMON laughs)
What nonsense! I've made everyone
Rich!
Ask them if I'm a demon -
(hissing)
You son of a
Bitch!

FILIJE
(to PRIVATEERS)
He's got you under a spell! Made you think everything exists only to be turned into profit!

SECOND PRIVATEER
Yep...

THIRD PRIVATEER
Sounds about right...

FIRST PRIVATEER
Freedom hater!

DEMON
See? They're quite happy, contented as
Sheep.
Their greed is alive, their conscience -
Asleep.
It's the ownership society, and ownership is

Nice.
And you can buy in, if you can meet
The price!

Lisa Hori-Garcia as DEMON, Adrian Mejia as FILIJI,
Ed Holmes, BW Gonzalez, Michael Gene Sullivan as PRIVATEERS Photo by Pax Ahimsa

DEMON snaps fingers, and a PRIVATEER hands DEMON a pair of green glasses. DEMON begins casting a spell on FILIJE.

DEMON (CONT'D)
Just put on the glasses, and
Open your eyes!
There's money to be made when you
Privatize!
Hospitals, parks, roads and
Schools -
All ways to make money, all Capitalist
Tools!

DEMON slips glasses on FILIJE.

DEMON (CONT'D)
I know how to play on the greed of
The masses
Just look at the world through

Money-colored glasses...

FILIJI falls under the DEMON’s spell.

FILIJE
Yes...you're right, it all makes sense...

Song: "MORE MONEY"

DEMON

EVERYWHERE YOU GO

THERE'S MONEY TO BE MADE,

WHAT'S THE POINT OF LIVING

IF YOU'RE NOT GETTING PAID?

I'VE STUDIED SOCIAL STRUCTURES,

I KNOW WHAT MAKES MEN TICK

I'VE NEVER FOUND A PROBLEM

THAT THE MARKET COULDN'T FIX.

FIRST PRIVATEER

EVERYTHING'S FOR SALE,

EVERYBODY'S GOT A PRICE,

EVERYONE'S A WINNER

WHEN YOU PRIVATIZE.

SECOND PRIVATEER

I LIKE SUGAR, I LIKE HONEY –

BUT NOTHING TASTES SWEETER

THAN A POCKET FULL OF MONEY!

DEMON

SPENDING –

PRIVATEERS

SPENDING –

DEMON

LENDING –

PRIVATEERS

LENDING –

ALL BUT FILIJE

THE QUEST FOR WEALTH IS NEVER ENDING!

I'M GETTIN MY MONEY,

YOU'RE GETTIN' YOUR MONEY.

AIN'T NOTHIN MORE TO LIFE THAN

MAKIN' ME MORE MONEY !

I'M GETTIN' MY MONEY

YOU'RE GETTIN' YOUR MONEY

AIN'T NOTHIN MORE TO LIFE THAN

MAKIN' MAKIN MORE MONEY!

THIRD PRIVATEER

NOTHING MOTIVATES LIKE PERCEIVED SELF-NEED,

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GREED.

SECOND PRIVATEER

THE APPETITE GROWS WITH EVER

PIECE OF TRASH YOU FEED IT,

PEOPLE BUY ANY CRAP

ONCE YOU TELL THEM THAT THEY NEED IT!

DEMON

EVERY BILLIONAIRE HAD TO START SOMEWHERE,

I CAN HELP YOU GET YOUR SHARE,

AND A LITTLE MORE TO SPARE...

FIRST PRIVATEER

WITH A FLASH THE CASH PASSES,

IT'S NEVER GONNA STOP.

AND JUST LIKE A FROTH

IT STICKS TO THE TOP!

THIRD PRIVATEER

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN BLESSED BY GREAT AMBITION

MADE MOVES TO IMPROVE

MY FINANCIAL POSITION.

SECOND PRIVATEER

I'VE NEVER FOUND ANYTHING

THAT COULDN'T BE SOLD,

I PAWNED MY MOTHER'S KIDNEY

FOR AN OUNCE OF GOLD!

DEMON

SPENDING –

PRIVATEERS

SPENDING –

DEMON

LENDING –

PRIVATEERS

LENDING –

ALL BUT FILIJE

THE QUEST FOR WEALTH IS NEVER ENDING

I'M MAKIN' MY MONEY,

YOU'RE MAKIN' YOUR MONEY,

AIN'T NOTHIN' MORE TO LIFE THAN

MAKIN' ME MORE MONEY.

I'M MAKIN' MY MONEY,

YOU'RE MAKIN' YOUR MONEY,

AIN'T NOTHIN' MORE TO LIFE THAN

MAKIN' MAKIN' MORE MONEY!

DEMON

NOW YOU GOT THE MESSAGE

YOU CAN TRULY SEE,

LEAVE IT ALL UP TO THE MARKET

AND YOU'LL LIVE LIFE FREE!

GOVERNMENT IS INEFFICIENT

AND CAN'T BE TRUSTED –

FIRST PRIVATEER

LEAVE IT TO THE BUREAUCRATS

SECOND PRIVATEER

EVERYTHING GETS BUSTED!

FILIJE has now been taken into the spell.

FILIJE

HEALTH CARE...

ALL BUT FILIJE

HEALTH CARE –

FILIJE

UTILITIES...

ALL BUT FILIJE

UTILITIES –

FILIJE

WELFARE...

ALL BUT FILIJE

WELFARE –

ALL

MILIT'RY!

I'M MAKIN' MY MONEY,

YOU'RE MAKIN' YOUR MONEY,

DEMON

EVERYTHING RUNS SMOOTHER

AS PRIVATE CORPORATIONS –

ALL

I'M MAKIN' MY MONEY,

YOU'RE MAKIN' YOUR MONEY,

DEMON

THIS HAS BEEN YOUR CAPITALIST

INDOCTRINATION!

DEMON gloats as FILIJE stumbles away.

FILIJE

No... wait.... There's something I'm supposed to do...

From off-stage the distant "Bah" of BAMUSA is heard.

BAMUSA

Baaaaah!

DEMON

(still casting the spell)

Buy into the dream, Filije, and you'll be rich, too...

BAMUSA is again heard from off stage.

BAMUSA

Baaaaah!

FilIJE

No... No! It's the glasses! That's the spell! Quick! *(To the PRIVATEERS)* Take off the glasses!

FILIJE takes off glasses.

SECOND PRIVATEER

These? We have to wear them.

FIRST PRIVATEER

Harmful UV rays -

FILIJE

Take them off!

THIRD PRIVATEER

Why should we?

FILIJE thinks, looking for a way to get them to remove glasses. After a moment he has it!

FILIJE

I'll give you one gold coin...

FIRST PRIVATEER

Sold!

(FIRST PRIVATEER tries to take off glasses, but can't.)

Wait a minute...! They're locked on!

The other PRIVATEERS try to take their glasses off.

SECOND PRIVATEER

So are mine! I can't take them off!

DEMON

Why would you want to? Don't they make everything look beautifully profitable!

THIRD PRIVATEER

(panicking)

Somebody help me!

FIlIJE

I've got it!

FILIJE reaches into bag, pulls out fingernail clippers.

SECOND PRIVATEER

Fingernail clippers?

FILIJE & JENEEBA (OFF)

With a nail cleaning attachment!

Using the attachment, FILIJE unlocks the FIRST PRIVATEER glasses and the PRIVATEER takes off glasses, rubs eyes. The FIRST PRIVATEER looks around without the green glasses for the first time in what might be years.

FIRST PRIVATEER

(shocked)

The air... it's... brown!

THIRD PRIVATEER

My air? Impossible!

FILIJE goes to the THIRD PRIVATEER and SECOND PRIVATEER to help them with their glasses. THIRD PRIVATEER takes off his glasses, starts coughing.

FIRST PRIVATEER
(to DEMON)
All this time you've been charging us to breathe, and you didn't use any of the money to keep the air clean?

DEMON
That would have cut into his profits...

THIRD PRIVATEER looks into the distance.

THIRD PRIVATEER
That's the school my kids go to? Why is it falling apart?

SECOND PRIVATEER takes off his glasses.

SECOND PRIVATEER
I didn't know -

THIRD PRIVATEER
You're supposed to have all the answers!

SECOND PRIVATEER
Look!

They watch an unseens bus drive by.

SECOND PRIVATEER (CONT'D)
Two dollars to ride the bus! (Note: Local joke. Based on whatever public service that had recently gone up in price)

The PRIVATEERS start screaming at one other.

FIRST PRIVATEER
This is what we've been profiting on?

SECOND PRIVATEER
How was I to know?

THIRD PRIVATEER clutches at his chest.

THIRD PRIVATEER
Oh god! My heart!

THIRD PRIVATEER collapses.

FIRST PRIVATEER
Somebody call a doctor!

SECOND PRIVATEER
Call a doctor!

DEMON
A doctor... right. Will that be cash, charge,
Or check?

I take Mastercard, Visa -

SECOND PRIVATEER
(to DEMON)
I'm gonna break Your neck!

SECOND PRIVATEER chases DEMON out. FIRST PRIVATEER helps THIRD PRIVATEER to his feet. FILIJE goes to help.

FILIJE
You need some help?

FIRST PRIVATEER
Thanks.

FILIJE helps THIRD PRIVATEER stand

FILIJE
You're welcome.

FIRST PRIVATEER looks at him, reaches into his pocket for money to pay.

FIlIJE (CONT'D)
On the house.

FILIJE and FIRST PRIVATEER exit, artfully stripping THIRD PRIVATEER's costume off, revealing him to be the STORYTELLER.

THE BIRTH OF THE MOCKINGBIRD

STORYTELLER

(to audience, acting out story)

Once upon a time there was a bird. Now, this bird had the very special job of telling all the other birds the truth. And, of course, this made her very unpopular. She was unpopular with the Big birds, who wanted her to say everything was fine, when in fact they were stealing food all the birds were supposed to share, and she was unpopular with the Little Birds, who wanted to hear that everything was fine, rather than feel stupid knowing they were being stolen from.

Then one lonely day the bird caught a worm, but before she could eat it the Worm said "Please don't eat me, and I will tell you a secret of being popular!" "What is it?" The truth always tastes bitter," said the Worm. "Always repeat what the Big Birds tell you, and they will treat you like one of their own." "What about the Little Birds?" "They are just Little Birds," said the Worm, "who cares what they think?"

So the Bird let the Worm go, and from that day forth always repeated whatever the Big Birds said, and they treated her as one of their own. And the little birds... thought her song was beautiful. And that is how the Mockingbird came to be. Though in your language you have another name for her... you call her: The Media.

SCENE 4

JENEEBA MEETS "ALL THE SINGLE LADIES"

STORYTELLER
Meanwhile, back in the village, everything was changing!

VILLAGERS enter from every direction followed by JENEEBA. In their midsts is the OLD WOMAN.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
While Filije was on his perilous journey Jeneeba tried to warn the people in the village about the Old Woman!

JENEEBA
Listen to me! There is a curse on our village! This Old Woman - she is a demon! And she will take everything you have!

VILLAGERS, startled, look at OLD WOMAN, then dismiss Jeneeba's warning with a laugh. VILLAGERS exit.

STORYTELLER
Poor Jeneeba... Each night she went back to her hut exhausted...

JENEEBA enters her hut, hugs FILIJE's coat, and falls into a fitful sleep.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
For despite her warnings the people of the village fell under the Old Woman's power! First she cast a spell of need...

The OLD WOMAN enters, chanting her incantation.

OLD WOMAN
Everything you simply wanted
Before,
You can not live without it
Any more!

JENEEBA
(in her sleep)
You don't need all of these things!

STORYTELLER
And then a tiny spell, so small you could barely hear it. But it buzzed in everyone's ears, whispering -

OLD WOMAN
(whispering)
The more I have,
The happier you'll be...

JENEEBA
(in her sleep)
It is not true! Things do not make you happy!

STORYTELLER
Finally, each night, into every hut she slithered like a snake. And into each ear she poured poison from a little bottle called -

OLD WOMAN
Every... man.... for... himself!

The OLD WOMAN and STORYTELLER exit, as JENEEBA starts awake.

JENEEBA
No will listen to me! They've all gone crazy...

JENEEBA picks up her broom, and tries to sweep the evil spirits away. Just as she finishes KUTA, a woman from the village, enters wearing a fancy, rather gaudy dress.

KUTA
Kenton diro, Jeneeba!

JENEEBA notices KUTA'S dress.

JENEEBA
Kuta!

KUTA
(KUTA shows off dress)
You like it?

JENEEBA
How did you pay for that?

KUTA
I didn't! I used this!

KUTA shows JENEEBA a credit card.

JENEEBA
It's just a little piece of plastic.

KUTA
It's a little piece of magic plastic!

JENEEBA
(Horrified)
Magic?

Suddenly Beyonce's "Single Ladies" begins to play. It is KUTA's ringtone.. KUTA answers her cell phone.

KUTA
(to JENEEBA) Justa sec... (on phone) Hello? Well, yes it is... Of course I do! Platinum? Send it right away!

Delighted, KUTA she hangs up.

KUTA (CONT'D)
Oh, Jeneeba! I'm pre-approved!

JENEEBA
What does that mean?

KUTA
It means... that I am already approved of!

JENEEBA
How can someone approve of you before they even know you?

KUTA
Poor Jeneeba, you just don't understand high finance.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as KUTA, Velina Brown as JENEEBA Photo by Pax Ahimsa

JENEEBA
Kuta, listen to me: you don't actually have any money!

KUTA
I don't?

JENEEBA
This piece of plastic -

KUTA
Magic plastic -

JENEEBA
Has you under a spell! You must get rid of it! You don't need all this –

The OLD WOMAN's voice floats in from offstage.

OLD WOMAN
The more I have the happier I'll be...

KUTA
(as if in a trance)
The more I have the happier I'll –

JENEEBA grabs KUTA, trying to wake her from the trance.

JENEEBA
No! Someday you are going to have to pay for all of this!

KUTA
Yes, but with low, low monthly payments!

JENEEBA
Kuta...You don't need it -

KUTA
I don't need it -

JENEEBA
You don't need it...

KUTA starts to wake from the trance.

KUTA
I don't -

KUTA'S phone rings again.

KUTA (CONT'D)
(to JENEEBA) Justa sec... *(on phone)* Hello? This is she... really? Oh, thank you!

Delighted and relieved, KUTA hangs up.

KUTA (CONT'D)
See, Jeneeba, there was nothing to worry about! I've been pre-approved again!

JENEEBA
No, Kuta!

KUTA
Man said I can consolidate all of my debt onto my new Plutonium card!

JENEEBA
Plutonium??

KUTA
With no interest fees for the first year as long as I always pay on time, always pay 200% of my minimum required payment, always maintain a minimum balance in a linked checking account that is always equal to or greater than my outstanding balance on the card... and that I understand that any and all of these requirements can be changed at any time with no prior notification... and non-compliance can and will result in increased interest payments, which will be accounted retroactively from the beginning of the account!

JENEEBA
Kuta -

KUTA
Additional charges may also apply.

The STORYTELLER - as a VILLAGER - enters.

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
(thrilled)
It's here!

STORYTELLER holds an outsized iPhone above his head.

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER) (CONT'D)
The new app has been released! Now we can see the cloud cover over Philadelphia, Pennsylvania... in real time!

KUTA AND STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
Ooooooo....

JENEEBA
But what, why would you want... why... you don't need this!

KUTA
Hey, lighten up!

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
It's only 99 cents.

JENEEBA
And how many of these apps have you bought?

STORYTELLER (as villager)
178.

The CHIEF enters.

CHIEF

Jeneeba!

JENEEBA

Father! Thank the Gods you are here!

CHIEF

What is wrong, my child?

JENEEBA

These two! They are throwing away their money!

The CHIEF looks disdainfully at KUTA and the VILLAGER.

CHIEF

Why are you wasting your money on that garbage! Come with me!

CHIEf pulls out a Wii control wand.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

I just bought a new game for my Wii!

KUTA & STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)

Wheeee!

CHIEF

I can make a virtual village Chief - a handsome one - who will feed virtual goats in a second life village that looks just like this one!

JENEEBA

Why don't you just go outside and feed real goats?

KUTA

Oh, Jeneeba...

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)

That is so 1.0...

KUTA and STORYTELLER exit the hut.

CHIEF

I'm sorry, my daughter. If you want to live poor, no one is stopping you. But we want to live rich!

Song: "HAPPY MAN"

JENEEBA

FATHER YOU TAUGHT ME WHEN I WAS A CHILD

HAPPINESS IS NOT A THING THAT ONE CAN BUY,

TO BE SATISFIED ONE DOES NOT NEED A LOT
FRESH FOOD TO EAT AND A SAFE PLACE TO LIE .

CHIEF

I'VE HAD MY FILL OF POVERTY, DISEASES,
AND DIRT
DON'T I DESERVE SOME DIGNITY
AND A GOOD CLEAN SHIRT?
AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS OF STRUGGLE
JUST TO STAY ALIVE,
NOW OUR CHANCE TO STRIVE FOR SOMETHING
GREATER HAS ARRIVED!

JENEEBA

DOES IT MAKE YOU A HAPPY MAN?
DOES IT MAKE YOU A WEALTHY MAN?
WHEN EVERYTHING YOU HAVE
IS OWED TO SOMEONE ELSE?

IS IT A SIGN OF SUCCESS?
HAVE WE ACHIEVED PROGRESS?
WHEN EVERYTHING WE HAVE
IS OWED TO SOMEONE ELSE?

CHIEF

I'VE DONE SO MUCH TO HAVE SO LITTLE
IN THIS WORLD,
AND WORK SO HARD SO I DON'T LOSE IT
IF IT'S SO WONDERFUL TO LEAD

A SIMPLE LIFE

TELL ME – WHY THE RICH MEN NEVER CHOOSE IT?

JENEEBA

FATHER TRUST ME –

SOMETHING HERE IS VERY WRONG

YOU THINK YOU NEED THINGS NOW

THAT YOU NEVER DID BEFORE.

YOU'RE SPENDING MONEY

THAT YOU NEVER CAN REPAY,

AND ALL THIS SPENDING LEADS TO

WANTING EVEN MORE!

CHIEF

TODAY I'M A WEALTHY MAN,

TODAY I'M A HAPPY MAN,

NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW!

I'LL COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF PLAN,

I'LL FIND A WAY THAT I CAN

PAY BACK ALL THE MONEY THAT I BORROW.

Unconvinced by his daughter, the CHIEF exits.

JENEEBA

ARE YOU REALLY A HAPPY MAN?

ARE YOU REALLY A WEALTHY MAN?

WHEN EVERYTHING YOU HAVE

IS OWED TO SOMEONE ELSE?

IS IT A SIGN OF SUCCESS?

HAVE WE ACHIEVED PROGRESS?

WHEN EVERYTHING WE HAVE

IS OWED TO SOMEONE ELSE?

STORYTELLER enters.

STORYTELLER

Poor Jeneeba...
Why should anyone believe their eyes
When their credit limit tells them otherwise?

JENEEBA

Oh, Filije…

JENEEBA exits.

SCENE 5

FILIJE AND THE SEA OF ACQUISITION

FILIJE enters.

STORYTELLER
But Filije was far away, standing on a beach...

A WOMAN enters with two blue umbrellas. The STORYTELLER takes one.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Looking out at something he had never seen before - rolling and flowing, big and blue -

The STORYTELLER and the WOMAN open their umbrellas, which become the waves of the sea.

FILIJE
The sea! It's so... big and blue!

STORYTELLER
The Old Woman said he must cross the Sea.

FILIJE
I need a boat!

STORYTELLER
Luckily -

A whistle is heard from off stage, and a small, wearable boat and paddle are handed to FILIJE.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
There was boat nearby!

FILIJE
That's convenient.

FILIJE puts the boat on, begins to paddle.

STORYTELLER
And so he set out-

The STORYTELLER and the WOMAN move about the stage as waves as FILIJE crosses the Sea.

FILIJE
Across the sea - the beautiful blue sea!

STORYTELLER
Listening to the songs of the birds-

FILIJE

Beautiful music!

STORYTELLER

So beautiful, so peaceful... he had no reason to suspect the terrible danger just ahead of him!

FILIJE

(suddenly worried)

The... what?

STORYTELLER

On he sailed, on the calm water -

FILIJE

Wait a minute -

STORYTELLER

Not knowing that at any minute huge, tearing jaws could drag him down to a watery death!

FILIJE starts to back paddle.

FILIJE

I'm going back!

STORYTELLER

Too late.

FILIJE

I can't swim!

STORYTELLER

Should have thought of that before! Did you bring a spear?

FILIJE

What?

STORYTELLER

A knife?

FILIJE

No...

Jeneeba

(offstage)

You didn't even bring a coat!

FILIJE

I don't need a coat, woman!

STORYTELLER

Suddenly there was a swirl of water, and -

The STORYTELLER and the WOMAN swirl their umbrellas, and a fish, CARLY, appears, dressed in a cross between a business suit and a fish costume. She becomes tangled up with FILIJE and his boat, struggles to escape, but then, with a shrug, accepts her fate.

CARLY
(to FILIJE)
Eat me!

FILIJE, frightened by the talking fish screams, and tries to row away - but CARLY, still entangled, stays with him.

CARLY (CONT'D)
It's okay with me! Dig in!

FILIJE
It... is?

CARLY
It's the way of the sea!

FILIJE
And you don't mind?

CARLY
Of course not - natural order of things.

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
The fish, like all fish, was a bit of a Darwinist.

FILIJE
I had no idea fish were so agreeable to being killed.

CARLY
We don't call it killing.

FILIJE
What do you call it?

CARLY
Acquisition! Smaller fish just become a subdivision of a bigger fish in the inevitable consolidation of the Free Fish Market!!

There is another swirl of waves, and another fish, PHIL, appears. He is also wearing a fishy business suit. PHIL is circling the boat FILIJE and CARLY are in.

PHIL
Hey, Carly.

Adrian Mejia as FILIJI, BW Gonzalez, as CARLY Photo by Pax Ahimsa

CARLY
Hey, Phil.

PHIL
Hear the news?

CARLY
What?

PHIL
Amalgamated Tuna just swallowed Sardines Unlimited.

CARLY
Shoulda seen that coming. How're you doing?

PHIL
Ya know... always looking for a well-structured meal.

CARLY
Phil, tell me the truth - does this portfolio make my assets look fat?

PHIL
(hungrily)
Why don't you get out of the boat and we can... have a meeting about it...

FILIJE
(to CARLY)
I think he wants to ... acquire you...

CARLY
No, see, when it's two fish of about the same size, like me and Phil here, then it's not acquisition. It's called -

CARLY AND PHIL
Merger!

CARLY
That's when we eat each other!

CARLY and PHIL playfully make "eating" sounds at each other.

FIlIJE
(slightly disgusted)
I don't even want to think about that...

CARLY
Mergers and acquisition are the only way for Free Market Fish to survive in a this competitive aquatic environment!

Upstage, unseen by the three, a sleek, silver shark - the BIG FISH - has appeared. Half hidden behind another blue umbrella she moves menacingly in the shadows, circling FILIJE, CARLY and PHIL.

FILIJE
But you don't survive! You get swallowed!

CARLY
Stop talking nonsense and eat me!

FilIJE
There's got to be a better way!

CARLY
Sushi platter, right here!

PHIL
Wait, Carly... maybe he's right...

CARLY
Phil?

PHIL
Maybe there is a better way than always living in fear, swimming in our own poop, eating our own young -

FiLIJE
You eat your own young?

CARLY
They're smaller and weaker. Them's the rules...

PHIL
You know, Carly... I've always wanted to...

CARLY
What?

PHIL
You'll think it's silly.

CARLY
No, I won't.

PHIL
I've always wanted to... evolve, ya know? Maybe learn how... to dance!

PHIL does a simple, elegant dance.

CARLY
Really!

PHIL
But how am I suppose to develop any real innovation - like legs and feet - if I spend all my time just thinking about mergers and acquisitions?

FIlIJE
That's right!

PHIL
Maybe if we all just tried to be the best we can - rather than just gobbling up our competition - maybe if we stop this mindless consolidation we could all evolve!

The BIG FISH smoothly exits.

CARLY
How would we stop the mergers and acquisitions?

PHIL
I don't know... maybe some kind of regulations...

A silver arm reaches out from offstage and grabs PHIL, who disappears, eaten, behind a splash of umbrella waves.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Aaarrggggg!

FIlIJE
What the hell was that?

CARLY
(frightened and impressed)
That's... the Big Fish!

The BIG FISH enters. The BIG FISH is a beautiful shark, with an powerful inevitability about her.

BIG FISH
That was delicious! With a spicy
Kick at the end!
No better way to start the day than with a nice, fat,
Dividend!

The BIG FISH turns on CARLY and FILIJE.

BIG FISH (CONT'D)
And what have we here? A new fish in the
Sea!
Someone else to add to my
Monopoly!

FILIJE
I'm not going to let you eat me!

BIG FISH
Don't put up a fight,
Don't kick up a fuss!
I'm not eating you - I'm making you...
An important part of us!

Who wants to be a part of something bigger,
something really great?

CARLY is thrill at the opportunity.

CARLY
Oooooh! Pick me! Pick me!

CARLY leaps out of the boat, and is eaten by the The BIG FISH.

FILIJE
Carly!

BIG FISH
(to FILIJE)
Now it's your turn pal. Come on -
Let's incorporate!

FILIJE
Nooo!

Song: "TOO BIG TO FAIL"

During the song the BIG FISH calmly chases FILIJE around the stage as he feverishly paddles to escape, with the STORYTELLER and the WOMAN using their umbrellas as the sea.

BIG FISH

THE BIG GET BIGGER,

THE WEAK GET BEATEN,

THE RICH GET RICHER

WHEN THE COMPETITION'S EATEN.

THE BIGGEST FISH'S WISHES ALWAYS WILL PREVAIL

WHEN CORPORATIONS GROW SO MUCH

THEY'RE JUST TOO BIG TO FAIL.

WITH EVERY BITE I TAKE

MY INFLUENCE IS GROWING,

IT'S NOT VERY HARD TO SEE

WHERE ALL THE MONEY'S GOING.

Velina Brown as THE BIG FISH Photo by Pax Ahimsa

IT'S A SIMPLE FACT OF LIFE
THERE'S NO USE RESISTING,
FATTENING UP THE UPPER CLASS
IS YOUR REASON FOR EXISTING!

THE BIG GET BIGGER,
THE WEAK GET BEATEN,
THE RICH GET RICHER
WHEN THE COMPETITION'S EATEN.
THE BIGGEST FISH'S WISHES ALWAYS WILL PREVAIL
WHEN CORPORATIONS GROW SO MUCH
THEY'RE JUST TOO BIG TO FAIL.

NOTHING ELSE IN LIFE
APPROACHES THE PERFECTION
AND ELEGANT EFFICIENCY OF
NATURAL SELECTION.
I'M EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS HOPED TO BE –
RULES AND REGULATIONS DON'T APPLY TO ME

FILIJE is finally chased down and eaten by the BIG FISH.

I GET TO CHOOSE WHAT'S MINE,
LITTLE FISH JUST FALL INTO LINE
THEY ALL BELIEVE THEY NEED ME,
THINK THEY BENEFIT WHEN THEY FEED ME.
I SLOWLY SINK MY TEETH IN,
SAVORING THE FLAVOR
THE SWEET AND TENDER FLESH OF
WORKING CLASS LABOR.

THE BIG GET BIGGER,

THE WEAK GET BEATEN ,

THE RICH GET RICHER

WHEN THE COMPETITION'S EATEN!

THE BIGGEST FISH'S WISHES ALWAYS WILL PREVAIL

WHEN CORPORATIONS GROW SO MUCH

THEY'RE JUST TO BIG TO FAIL!

BIG FISH (CONT'D)
(matter of factly threatening audience)
You'll get devoured, bit by bit, by
Degrees,
and... wait... do you smell that? It smells like...
BAD CHEESE!

The BIG FISH, sick to its stomach, vomits up PHIL, then CARLY, and finally FILIJE, who is holding the CHIEF'S cheese.

PHIL
That was truly disgusting.

CARLY
That's the last time I ask anyone to acquire me!

FiLIJE
The only one who benefits from all these mergers and acquisitions is the Big Fish who eats last!

CARLY and PHIL look at each other, then at the BIG FISH.

BIG FISH
Uummm. I think I hear my margin calling. Bye!

BIG FISH quickly exits with CARLY and PHIL in hot pursuit.

STORYTELLER
Sometimes the only way to bust a trust is
To eat some portion of the Upper Crust!

The BIG FISH crosses again panickedly, followed by CARLY and Phil. FILIJE collapses in exhaustion, as The STORYTELLER hands his umbrella to the WOMAN, and begins his next story...

THE DOVES AND THE FOXES

STORYTELLER
Once upon a time... there was a flock of gentle doves, who all laid their eggs in nests on the ground.

The STORYTELLER becomes the doves, as the WOMAN covers herself with the umbrellas, becoming the eggs.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
One day a fox got into the nests and started to eat the eggs!

The STORYTELLER becomes the Fox, and begins his attack.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
The peaceful doves, seeing their future threatened, turned into hawks, and tore the fox to pieces!

The STORYTELLER becomes the Hawks, and acts out destroying the "Fox."

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Afterwards they turned back into doves. But from that day on all the other foxes... left them alone.

The WOMAN takes the umbrellas, exits. FILIJE gets up,, adjusts his boat, and continues his journey. He pauses for a moment to look back at the STORYTELLER who nods in support. FILIJE exits.

SCENE 6

CATCHING THE WITCH

STORYTELLER
So, while Filije sailed across the sea, back in the village everyone was fulfilling their dreams!

KUTA
(off)
Charge it!

KUTA enters, wearing another fancy dress, carrying a shopping bag, and is trailing a long stream of credit cards. JENEEBA is close behind her.

STORYTELLER
Kuta had a closet full of the finest clothes!

KUTA
And I have my new Titanium card! No limit! Easy payments! Some restrictions apply!

JENEEBA
You still don't have any money!

STORYTELLER
Jeneeba's father, the handsome chief -

CHIEF enters. He is now wearing elements of a suit, dark glasses, is also carrying a shopping bag, and has a large, ostentations key on a fob.

CHIEF
The handsome and affluent Chief -

STORYTELLER
Had not only mortgaged much of his land to buy virtual farms in cyberspace, he had also purchased the largest sports utility vehicle he could find!

CHIEF dangles his key as STORYTELLER exits.

CHIEF
You never know when you have to go off-roading!

JENEEBA
We don't even have roads!

CHIEF
And that is why I keep it in the hut - so it won't get dirty!

CHIEF activates load, annoying alarm on his vehicle.
STORYTELLER, as villager, enters with "HUT FOR SALE" sign.

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
(*overjoyed*)
I turned my hut into cash! I just borrowed against my deed... used the money to buy another hut, fixed it up, sold it, then bought another hut! It's called "flipping huts!" And the best part is, even if I do nothing the huts are always worth more when I sell them!

JENEEBA
Are you people crazy? You can't just make something worth more by doing nothing!

KUTA
We're not doing nothing! We're all believing it's worth more!

CHIEF
Daughter, it's very simple: as long as we have confidence in the system, the value of everything in our village will only go up!

JENEEBA
Confidence? You are basing your whole lives, everything you've worked for on nothing but confidence?

CHIEF
We are investing in our futures, Jeneeba. And quite frankly I'm worried that you are not building capital security!

JENEEBA
What does that even mean?

CHIEF
No idea! But you must have confidence -

KUTA
You must have confidence -

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
You must have confidence -

JENEEBA
Stop saying that!

OLD WOMAN appears.

OLD WOMAN
(casting a spell)
You must have confidence...

JENEEBA
The demon!

CHIEF
What are you talking about? This woman has brought nothing but prosperity to our village!

OLD WOMAN
Don't thank me - thank the Bankers and Brokers
Who cast
The Great Spell of Credit, that helped you
Surpass
Your wildest dreams. And I just heard,
Because of the wealth this town is
Creating,
You've all increased your
Credit rating!

The OLD WOMAN pulls out another long scroll contract.

VILLAGERS
Yay!

CHIEF
I'll borrow some more!

KUTA
Where do I sign?

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
I'm going to buy more huts!

OLD WOMAN
Just put your name on the line...

The VILLAGERS gleefully sign for more loans, then pull out cell phones to make more deals. The OLD WOMAN turns to JENEEBA.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
(still casting her spell)
Jeneeba... why do you deny yourself all this
Capital growth?
Are you waiting for Filije to return?
Well, I
Think we both
Know he's never coming back!

JENEEBA
He will return!

OLD WOMAN
He's at the bottom of
The sea!
Or he's become one of us - he can't fight the
Powers that be!

JENEEBA starts to weaken.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
You're all alone, and your next payment's due,
And soon you'll lose your hut! I'd refinance if I were you!

JENEEBA fights off the spell.

JENEEBA
I don't believe any of it!

OLD WOMAN
Give up Jeneeba!
This is the system, these are the
Ways
Everyone lives! Blindly spending there
Days
Damned by their illusions, trapped in a debtors
Maze!
This spell cannot be broken as long as everyone-

JENEEBA
Pays!

OLD WOMAN
What?

JENEEBA
That's it, isn't it? Your magic only works as long as everyone pays you! Without the payments-

OLD WOMAN
Noooooooo! Everyone must
Believe!
Consumer confidence is the thing
That we've
Built our economy on!
You throw that in the Trash?

OLD WOMAN turns to the rest of the VILLAGERS.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Hold on... something's happening... I feel it!
A crash!

CHIEF
A what?

OLD WOMAN
The Market has crashed!

KUTA
What does that mean?

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
But... but the Market... it's not supposed
To go down!

OLD WOMAN
It's not my fault! I didn't do it! But there's Someone in
Town
Who didn't believe that the spell made good business
Sense -
Someone who made the Market crash because she lacked

The OLD WOMAN looks at JENEEBA

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Confidence...

KUTA
Jeneeba!

JENEEBA
What?

CHIEF
My daughter?

JENEEBA
Wait! Everyone listen to me -

OLD WOMAN
She's the one who
Cursed
All the wealth you have worked for!

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
Of all crimes
That's the worst!

The Villagers surge toward JENEEBA, but the CHIEF steps between them and his daughter.

CHIEF
She didn't mean to do it! And don't worry. We'll all get through this...

OLD WOMAN
A wonderful sentiment, and a brave thing to
Say,
Since, because of the Crash, your debts all come due
Today!

VILLAGERS are horrified.

JENEEBA
This is a trick!

OLD WOMAN
It's an emergency! The Markets are
Down!
The Banks need the money. Things are tough all
Around!

CHIEF
But- but- I can't -

OLD WOMAN
Can't pay your debt? That's terrible!
Horrific!
But someone's got to pay it. Tell me who, be
Specific!
Taxpayers? Investors? The CEO?
Who?
No one else signed the contracts - no one but -

OLD WOMAN, in a sweeping gesture, points at everyone - the CHIEF, the villagers, and the audience.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
You!

Terrified, the Villagers turn to the cause of their problems.

CHIEF
Jeneeba!

JENEEBA
I've done nothing but tell you all the truth!

Frustrated, JENEEBA pushes the CHIEF out of the way and lunges at the OLD WOMAN. STORYTELLER (as VILLAGER) and KUTA grab Jeneeba and pull her back.

JENEEBA (CONT'D)
She did this!

OLD WOMAN
(feigning weakness)
See how she blames me, when all I've
Ever done
Is bring investments, and equity, and helped
Everyone!

KUTA
That is so messed up!

JENEEBA
Kuta, listen -

OLD WOMAN

But it's not about me -

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)

You're not the one that she
Hurt!

CHIEF

My daughter broke the spell-

OLD WOMAN

And cast your hopes in the
Dirt!

JENEEBA

I know what we must do -

The OLD WOMAN points at JENEEBA.

OLD WOMAN

She's the witch I tell you!

The Villagers, frightened, release JENEEBA and run from her, joining the OLD WOMAN.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

She'll curse each one of you in
Turn!

JENEEBA

Listen to me -

OLD WOMAN

She's a communist! An atheist! A... person of
Concern!
And what is it we do with witches? What does every child
Learn?
If you want prosperity to come back to your village, than this witch you must...

OLD WOMAN and villagers turn to audience for answer.

AUDIENCE

Burn!

KUTA and STORYTELLER as VILLAGER take cue from audience, turn and point threateningly at JENEEBA as the CHIEF turns away. All freeze. The STORYTELLER steps out of crowd.

STORYTELLER

There once was a woman who spoke truth to power. And a Father, who had to chose between his truthful daughter and the lies he had invested so much in.

All turn to The CHIEF.

JENEEBA

Father, father please. No!

CHIEF reluctantly joins others and points at JENEEBA.

JENEEBA (CONT'D)

Noooooooo!

JENEEBA runs off , chased by villagers. The CHIEF walks sadly off, as The OLD WOMAN laughs triumphantly, then exits.

The Cast of Too Big To Fail Photo by Pax Ahimsa

SCENE 7

FILIJE AND THE BIG CITY

STORYTELLER enters.

STORYTELLER
Finally Filije reached the other side of the Sea...

FILIJE enters, wearily paddling. He takes off his boat, and casts himself down, exhausted.

FILIJE
Where am I?

STORYTELLER
He did not know where he was -

FILIJE
(to STORYTELLER)
No! I am asking you!

STORYTELLER
(confused)
Me?

FILIJE
Yes! This is all your fault!

STORYTELLER
My fault?

FILIJE
Why did you have to say I was impatient?

STORYTELLER
I did say it wasn't always a bad thing -

FILIJE
Why not Filije, the brave and fiscally sensible?

STORYTELLER
That's not how the story goes -

FILIJE
I can't do this! Oh, Jeneeba... Jeneeba! All I wanted was a herd of goats -

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
Which he could not afford to feed -

FILIJE
Beautiful clothes for my wife -

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
Which she did not ask for -

FILIJE
And a big, big house for my family -

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
With a mortgage he could never have paid off -

FILIJE
You're not helping!

STORYTELLER
Okay - one upon a time there once was a rabbit, who -

FILIJE
Oh shut up! I don't have time for your stupid stories!

STORYTELLER
And that is why I called you impatient. But okay, fine! I will cut to the chase –

The STORYTELLER does an elaborate semi-silent mime through the entire rabbit story until he comes to the part he wants to tell FILIJE.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
– and at that point the Cheetah said to Rabbit "Perhaps you did not recognize it because you have never seen anything like it before."

FILIJE
(*screams*)
What does that mean?!?

The STORYTELLER points into the distance.

STORYTELLER
And that was when Filije saw, in the distance, the great city!

FILIJE looks and sees The City.

FILIJE
(to STORYTELLER)
Thank you.

STORYTELLER
That is how the story goes.

FILIJE
Now I just need to find this Kodo...

A MAN enters. He is dressed like a manual laborer - hard hat, coveralls, and is carrying a lunchbox.He overhears the conversation.

MAN
Kodo! Did you say Kodo?

FILIJE
Yes! Do you know him?

MAN
Everyone knows Kodo! He preaches the truth -

FILIJE
But he is a demon!

MAN
He set everyone free at last!

FILIJE
What did he say?

The MAN sits down, and opens his lunchbox.

MAN
"Capitalism can work for the working class!"

The MAN offers FILIJE a sandwich. FILIJI takes it, hungrily starts to eat.

MAN (CONT'D)
"Let your money work for you! Don't get dirty and sweaty!
Be rich as Rockefeller, be as loaded as Getty!
Don't be a slave to despair, set your hopes free!
You can all be members of the Bourgeoisie!"

FILIJE
But everybody can't be rich!

MAN
What are you...French?

FILIJE
Isn't it better to just make sure everyone has enough?

The MAN snatches the sandwich back from FILIJE.

MAN
Who gets to say how much is enough?

The MAN packs up, begins to leave. FILIJE shivers.

FILIJE
It is so cold here!

MAN
People only come in
Two kinds,
Those who get ahead, and those who get
Left behind!
Which are you?

FILIJE
Show me where I can find this Kodo!

MAN nods cross, opens trap door in stage. MAN and FILIJE exit through trap..

STORYTELLER
And so...

STORYTELLER is startled as moaning, crying, begging, whispering figures, the SOULLESS SOULS, begin to enter from all directions. These are faceless figures of people draped and shrouded in tatters. They move slowly through the space, tortured, hungry, relentlessly sad. The STORYTELLER gets out of their way.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
(frightened)
So, Filije came to... the city!

FILIJE and MAN re-enter.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
There Filije saw such strange things... tall, shiny buildings, but... in the doorways -

FILIJE
People begging...

MAN
(indicating, proudly)
Stores bursting with food!

FILIJE
But outside people are hungry...

MAN
Magnificent hospitals!

FILIJE
Surrounded by the poor and sick!

MAN
It's their own fault! The opportunities are there!
You can't blame the system.... The system is fair!

FILIJE
How can people live like this?

MAN
Come on!

MAN, FILIJE exit, followed by the SOULLESS SOULS.

STORYTELLER
Soon Filije was at the top of the highest building...

MAN and FILIJE re-enter.

MAN
This is the office of Kodo the Great!

FILIJE heroically pulls out his fingernail clippers as a weapon, and his cheese as a shield. He warily stalks around the office. The MAN follows him.

FILIJE
Where are you? Come out, Kodo! I, Filije, am here!

MAN starts to laugh.

FILIJE (CONT'D)
What... what is wrong?

MAN
Nothing, Filije! It's just that... I've been with you
All along!

The MAN begins to take off his coveralls, underneath which he is wearing a very fancy suit. The MAN reveals himself to be KODO, and the truth slowly dawns on FILIJE.

FILIJE
Kodo!

Ed Holmes as KODO THE GREAT, Adrain Mejia as FILIJI, Michael Gene Sullivan as STORYTELLER
Photo by Pax Ahimsa

KODO
(complimenting)
No one has made it this far before.

FILIJE
But... you... don't look like a demon...

KODO
Would it make you feel better if I had horns on
My head?
Skin like a lizard? Eyes blazing
Red?
That's the demon everyone expects, that's the
Evil that computes,
But the truth is most of us just wear
Business suits.

FILIJE
You're trying to confuse me!

KODO
We don't live in caves, we live in a house or a
Condo,
We don't live on blood, we live on stock trades and
Cash flow.
We're just creatures of the Market, soldiers of the bottom line,
Who
Always wanted a little more. In fact,
We're just like...
You.

FILIJE
I'm nothing like you! I do not think only of money!

KODO
(mocking)
"All I want is nice clothes for my
Wife,
A big house lot's of goats, to live the good
Life!"

FILIJE
That is different! I...I... don't need to be rich...

KODO
(singing)
"Even a poor man can live like
A king,
Without a coin to my name I can buy most
Anything..."

FILIJE
That was the Old Woman! She... she is a demon, too! She cast a spell, and she made me do –

KODO
Exactly what you wanted to do.

FILIJE
No...it was magic!

KODO
Here's a little secret, Filije,
Promise not to tell -
You did it to yourself -
There are no magic spells.

FILIJE
(stunned)
Not... a spell?

KODO
Don't be silly! Of course not! Magic? Who
Needs it!
Inside each person is a hunger. The system just
Feeds it.

FILIJE
What is this hunger?

KODO
Some say it is (points to head) here, some say (points to stomach) here, some say it is on the back of your heart. It's your greed button – your Soto Do.

FILIJE
Soto Do -

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
I bet you were all wondering when we were going to get back to that!

One of KODO'S PERSONAL ASSISTANTS, masked as a GAZELLE, enters and takes his work clothes. Another PERSONAL ASSISTANT, masked as an ANTELOPE, enters with a large steak on a tray. It is the same steak the LION earlier. KODO cuts off a piece of the steak.

KODO
Everyone has one... and you can use that, if
You're smart!
First – get the workers to identify with the
Richest of people.

KODO looks at audience.

KODO (CONT'D)
You can do that, Filije- after all, they're
Just... sheeple.

KODO hands the piece of steak to the starving FILIJE, who takes it.

FILIJE
Me?

KODO
Sure! Sharp guy like you, just what
We need!
Company's always looking for someone who really
Understands greed!

FILIJE
You're offering me a job?

KODO
Not a job - a career! A corporate paycheck, with
Perks!
You'll get that big house! A big car!
Shoot the works!

FILIJE eats the piece of steak.

KODO (CONT'D)
You can have the Old Woman's job, and at twice the
Pay!
Truth is, she was an Affirmative Action hire
Anyway.

FILIJE
(violently shivering)
This is all so fast... and why is it so cold in here?

KODO
We've sucked this country dry, now we're expanding
Overseas!
So many countries to mortgage, so many peasants to
Squeeze!

STORYTELLER
Filije thought about it -

FILIJE
What about the money I owe?

KODO
Your debt is cancelled! Gone! Just let it go –

STORYTELLER
Filije thought long and hard about what Kodo had said...

KODO
Join us, Filije, and you'll have more than one stupid
Goat!

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
But he was tired, weak, and hungry. And remember, he also didn't bring a–

STORYTELLER indicates to audience to finish rhyme.

AUDIENCE
... Coat.

KODO
This is your chance to be on history's
Winning team!

FILIJE
(weakening)
This might be my only chance to
Make it...

KODO
This is your chance to own a part of the
Capitalist Dream!

FILIJE
I'd be a fool not to...
Take it.

KODO indicates doorway, and FILIJE starts toward it. (At this point the audience may begin to shout "No!" Don't do it!" FILIJE looks back at audience for a moment, then exits. Pause.

THE DREAM OF RICHES

STORYTELLER
(to audience)
The Dream Of Riches!
This system only works as long as the Workers
Buy it!
It's why the Rich can bankrupt your country and
You all keep so quiet!

STORYTELLER stops the band from playing, then fixes the audience with an accusatory glare.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
(with disdain)
They close factories, steal your money, and still you don't
Riot!
Oh, some talk of Revolution, but you'll never
try it.
They tell you "you are not workers, you're in the
"Middle Class."
Middle Class is just a worker with a big debt who is frightened into
Kissing the boss's ass!
Dazzled by luxuries, as your lives go from bad to
Worse;
Buying into Capitalism is the Working Class's
Curse!

STORYTELLER sits, still glaring at the audience. Finally he drops his head in frustration. After a pause the band begins a thumping beat, which makes the STORYTELLER's head pop up. He looks at them for a moment, then accepts that the story must go on. He gets up, and launches back into the story with his customary friendly energy.

SCENE 8

THE BURNING OF THE WITCH

STORYTELLER
And so - Filije began the journey back to his village. Back across the Sea, where the Little Fish had eaten the Big Fish, and had agreed to regulations to keep them from eating each other! But Filije did not care. Back, through Nafa, where the people had just passed a single payer health care bill! But Filije did not notice. It seemed his Soto Do was twisted too tight by the chilling words of Kodo. And back in the village things were looking grim...

STORYTELLER exits, as KUTA enters, in distress.

KUTA
My Titanium card, my Plutonium card - all cancelled!

The STORYTELLER re-enters as VILLAGER. He has a "Hut for Sale" sign with a big "Foreclosure!" plastered across it.

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
I am ruined! No one can get a home loan - my huts are all unflipped!

KUTA
Even my Limited Edition Diamond Uranium Mad Money Card - with a picture of Jim Cramer - gone!

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
All I have left is my home - and the bank is going to foreclose on that soon!

KUTA feverishly pokies buttons on her phone.

KUTA
All the single ladies... they are gone!

CHIEF enters.

CHIEF
My virtual farm is on fire!

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
Don't worry! I will get some virtual water!

CHIEF
It is too late. Oh, why did this happen? Everything was going so well, we were all so prosperous -

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
We were all living the good life -

KUTA
Until Jeneeba broke the magic spell!

CHIEF
Are you sure it was her?

KUTA
That's what the Old Woman said!

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
What else could it have been?

CHIEF
I don't know... what if the whole thing - credit, housing loans - what if they are just ways for these companies to keep us permanently in debt...

STORYTELLER (AS VILLAGER)
And what if they just use the money we pay themselves to gamble on the Stock Market so they can get even richer...

KUTA
And what if the market crashes when they lose on their stupid bets, but they make everyone suffer because of their greed...

They all think for a moment.

ALL
Naaah!

CHIEF
It's probably magic!

KUTA
That makes much more sense!

The OLD WOMAN enters, holding a blazing torch.

OLD WOMAN
People of the village... it is
Time!
Bring forth the witch to pay for her
Crime!

STORYTELLER exits, and returns with JENEEBA, bound. She is dragged and tied to a stake. KUTA places fire wood at JENEEBA's feet.

JENEEBA
Father! Please - you all know me -

OLD WOMAN
Silence! Unless you have a
Confession,
About how you are the cause of this entire
Recession!

CHIEF
Let her speak! She can't hurt us now.

JENEEBA
I know you are all scared. Everything you worked for, all you saved is gone. Now you need someone to blame. You cannot believe that the system that has given you so much is actually robbing you! I just wanted to say... I understand.

CHIEF
So... you forgive us?

Pause.

JENEEBA
Hell, no!

OLD WOMAN
Enough of this talk! Time to heat up
The economy!
Time to light a fire under the butt of this
Economic recovery.
Burning this witch will put a end to doubts and
Rumors,
And you can all go back to being happy little
Consumers!

CHIEF
Isn't there some other way?
Maybe we can -

OLD WOMAN
No! Getting rid of unbelievers is the only real
Stimulus plan!

The VILLAGERS turn away, consoling each other, as the OLD WOMAN turns gloating to JENEEBA.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Well, Jeneeba, this is it.
Any last words to Say?
You could tell them you were right, go ahead -
They won't listen anyway.
Their debt will just deepen,
The Market will keep them,
Caught up in a Credit snare -
No truth can convince them
It's not the best system,
So goodbye, Jeneeba -

OLD WOMAN goes to light the pyre with the torch, but before she can FILIJE enters. He is wearing a business suit, dark glasses, and has a briefcase and a hard demeanor.

FILIJE
Stop right there!

The Cast of Too Big To Fail Photo by Pax Ahimsa

JENEEBA

Filije!

CHIEF

My son! You've come back!

OLD WOMAN

So, you survived! The hero
Returns!
And just as his beloved Jeneeba
Burns!

FILIJE

You cannot do this!

JENEEBA

Oh thank the Gods! Quick, untie me...

OLD WOMAN

You're too late, Filije! The wife you
Desired
Is about to be burned -

FILIJE

I don't think so...

OLD WOMAN

Why?

FILIJE

Because - you've been
Fired.

FILIJE hands OLD WOMAN a pink slip.

OLD WOMAN

I'm what?

JENEEBA

(to FILIJE)

Deal with her later - untie me!

FILIJE

Word from the top. Corporate wants to go a different way,
They don't like how you've handled this, so - you go -

OLD WOMAN

And you stay?

The VILLAGERS finally take in FILIGE's change in appearance and demeanor.

CHIEF
Filije?

JENEEBA
Why are you talking like that?

FILIJE
(to VILLAGERS)
It's Mr. Filije. I'm with the company
Now.
I'll be collecting the debts on each goat, hut, and
Cow.

JENEEBA
(brokenhearted)
Oh, no... no!

FILIJE
(to JENEEBA)
Don't make a scene, don't be
Grotesque.
(to OLD WOMAN)
And you...(suddenly harsh) pick up your last check, and clean out
Your desk.

OLD WOMAN
I don't believe it - you can't fire
Me!

FILIJE
(points at pink slip)
Section two, paragraph
Three.

OLD WOMAN
But... but I need this job! I have bills to
Pay!

FILIJE
Then you'd better get another job right
Away!

OLD WOMAN
What will happen? Where will I go?
I'm too old to start over! This is all that I –

OLD WOMAN tries to rhyme, fails

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
– can do.

OLD WOMAN is shocked and confused.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
What... what's happening to me?

FILIJE
(coldly)
You're not one of us anymore, you've lost
Your edge.
Your stocks are now unoptioned, your hedge funds
Unhedged.

OLD WOMAN
(desperate)
Wait... I believe in the system! I believe in every detail!
I believe in the Free Market! It's too big to (tries to rhyme, fails)
...not work! Aaarrgh!

OLD WOMAN turns on FLILJE savagely.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
I'm the one who saved this village, Filije, and you're not taking it from
Me!
This isn't over! Just you wait... and... (tries to rhyme, fails again)
Aarrgh!

OLD WOMAN disappears. FILIJE turns to JENEEBA.

FILIJE
(to VILLAGERS)
And now, to deal with this woman who made all your lives so tragic -

VILLAGERS cringe, as FILIJE turns back to JENEEBA.

JENEEBA
Filije –

FILIJE
There is only one thing to say to you –

Everyone freezes. Pause. STORYTELLER turns to audience.

STORYTELLER
At this point you are thinking - what a terrible story! I have been sitting all this time in the sun (or in this theater), and now I am sweaty (or tired) and depressed! Don't worry - the world is depressing enough. Sometimes, what you need is something else...

STORYTELLER rejoins cringing VILLAGERS, as everyone unfreezes.

FILIJE
There is only one thing to say to you-

FILIJE unties JENEEBA.

FILIJE (CONT'D)
Jeneeba, there is no magic!

FILIJE kisses JENEEBA..

CHIEF
I am so confused.

JENEEBA
I... but... the way you were acting-

FILIJE
It was the only way to get our debt cancelled!

CHIEF
No magic?

FILIJE
That was just a trick to get you to believe all their nonsense!

KUTA
That is so messed up!

CHIEF
When you think about it, unlimited growth does sound a little fishy...

FILIJE
Jeneeba, my love, you and I are debt free!

STORYTELLER
What about the rest of us?

JENEEBA
Ah! This is what I wanted to talk to you all about... before you tried to burn me!

JENEEBA slowly stalks toward the VILLAGERS, who cower in shame.

CHIEF
Oh... about that...

KUTA
Our bad!

JENEEBA
The next time someone raggedy-assed stranger says "Let's set fire to someone!" please, think twice about it!

The VILLAGERS fearfully nod in agreement.

JENEEBA (CONT'D)
Anyway... what I was going to say was you are giving all your money to the banks and credit companies -

CHIEF
We have to pay our debts.

JENEEBA
That's my point! Kuta, how much was that dress?

KUTA
This? Um... twenty gold coins.

JENEEBA
How much are you paying for it?

KUTA
With interest, fifteen easy payments of 2 coins each!

JENEEBA
Kuta! That's 30 gold coins! *(Points at STORYTELLER AS VILLAGER)* And your hut! Even if you could pay off a fifty year mortgage, you will have paid twice what the hut is worth! But they don't want you to pay it off! They want you in debt forever!

CHIEF
What can we do?

JENEEBA
Well -

Everyone freezes again. STORYTELLER steps out.

STORYTELLER
Do you know what Jeneeba's idea was?
Do you know what she was going to
Say?

He rejoins VILLAGERS.

JENEEBA
These demon companies only grow when they are fed money. And they will starve if we all don't-

JENEEBA indicates to audience to finish line with her.

JENEEBA AND AUDIENCE
Pay!

CHIEF, KUTA, STORYTELLER
What?

JENEEBA
You have already paid your debts off! All that is left is interest! All that is left is their greed.

CHIEF

But the companies... they will come after me!

JENEEBA

Not if we all do it together! It is called a payment strike! They can't come after all of us.

KUTA

But we can't just not pay - that would be wrong...

FILIJE

I've been to the City, and I learned that when these big demon companies can't pay their debts they say they are too big to fail, and that the people must save them.

ALL

No!

FILIJE

They call it a "bailout." But when the people can't pay their own debts the demons never bail us out!

JENEEBA

We must tell them we will pay off what we honestly owe, but after that we are done feeding them! We are all paid off! We are all done!

There is a pause, then the STORYTELLER AS VILLAGER steps timidly forward.

STORYTELLER

I... am... paid off!

He looks around and to the heavens for some horrible response or retribution - but there is none. KUTA steps forward.

KUTA

I am paid off!

Again, there is no negative cosmic response. The VILLAGERS look at the CHIEF, who steps forward.

CHIEF

A man pays his debts...

JENEEBA

Father?

CHIEF

And mine... are paid off!

The VILLAGERS rejoice, as the STORYTELLER steps out to address the audience. KUTA and the CHIEF bid farewell to JENEEBA and FILIJE, and exit.

STORYTELLER

Kuta cut up her credit cards, and learned to live on what she could afford. The huts in the village were all flipped back into affordable homes, not high yield investments. And the Chief, who had lost virtually everything, gained back his daughter and a son. But he did make one last purchase -

CHIEF re-enters.

CHIEF

Look who I found on EBay!

BAMUSA bounds onstage.

BAMUSA

Baaaah!

JENEEBA and FILIJE smile as CHIEF and BAMUSA wave and exit.

STORYTELLER

And Jeneeba and Filije -

JENEEBA

I will be waiting for you in our new home... husband.

JENEEBA starts to exit, as she did at the end of the first scene. This time, however, FILIJE chases after her. Taking her hand, he turns her, and they kiss. FILIJE then gives the STORYTELLER one last look, and the couple exits.

EPILOGUE

STORYTELLER
I would like to say that they lived, as you say, happily ever after - but they knew...

STORYTELLER spies FILIJE's briefcase, which is still on the stage..

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
That the demons were still out there -

He picks up briefcase as if were poisonous..

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
- are still out there, feeding on the greed of human beings, always telling us that we cannot live without them - that they must save us, for we cannot save ourselves. Do you believe we cannot save ourselves?

AUDIENCE says "No!"

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
I said, do you believe we cannot save ourselves?

AUDIENCE says "No!" STORYTELLER puts briefcase on pyre.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
They have made this system of privatization, of credit debt, and Stock Market into king!

Pause.

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Do you think it is time, perhaps, that we... eat the king?

AUDIENCE says "Yes!"

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Share the meat?

AUDIENCE says "Yes!"

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Use the bones to fertilize the land?

AUDIENCE says "Yes!"

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
For who is more important - the King, or the people?

AUDIENCE says "The People!"

STORYTELLER (CONT'D)
Yes! That is more like it!

STORYTELLER plays rhythm from beginning of play on his drum.
Band repeats rhythm, and launches into final musical number.
Rest of cast stream onstage for last dance, which ends with bow.

End of Play

Posibilidad

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan

Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran

SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

Posibilidad

or DEATH OF THE WORKER

"Anyone concerned about the state of global politics and about the state of political humor – should listen to the San Francisco Mime Troupe's message."
- New York Times

"Part savagely acute political satire part living newspaper, and all broad, tuneful, and timely musical comedy."
- San Francisco Chronicle

Poster by Favianna Rodriguez Photo by David Allen

Posibilidad

With blind faith in Capitalism once again shaken by yet another economic earthquake people around the world again questioned if Wall Street was the only street. How could a system we've been taught is so perfect be so obviously and repeatedly flawed? Surely there must be another way…

Infused with New Age psychobabble and the tango rhythms of classic telenovelas, Posibilidad tells the twin stories of factory closures in the United States and Argentina, and how workers from two different cultures respond.

"(Posibilidad, or Death of the Worker) ... is a brilliant work, combining tragedy and humor to make a very pointed argument for thinking outside the box on the state of Labor and jobs today."
THE HUFFINGTON POST

"Bold and entertaining...it wouldn't be a Mime Troupe show if it weren't funny as well as politically engaged, and funny about being politically engaged."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Sofia
Manny
Donella
Joe
Ernesto
Ms. Gachs
Indelecio
Mama Claudia
El Patron
Thiago
Juan
Maria
Worker #1
Worker #2
Banker

POSIBILIDAD opened on July 4th, 2010, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Wilma Bonet, with the following cast:

Sofia.....Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Manny, Indelecio.....Brian Rivera*
Donella, Mama Claudia.....Velina Brown*
Joe, Banker.....Michael Gene Sullivan*
Ernesto, Thiago, Juan.....Rotimi Agbabiaka
Ms. Gachs, el Patron, Maria.....Maggie Mason
Worker #1.....Jimmy Mitchell
Worker #2.....Regina Galbick
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

THE FACTORY FLOOR OF A SMALL CLOTHING MANUFACTURER .

Loud, chaotic sound and music of machines.

After a moment the door opens. A woman, SOFIA, appears. She is young, clearly pregnant, and dressed in the logo-emblazoned apron of a factory worker. She is in the midst of a panic attack, and it takes a few attempts for her to simply enter the factory floor. Closing the door behind her, and gripped with anxiety, she gets to the center of the room. She pauses, shaking. Forcing herself to become calm she closes her eyes, and the factory sounds fade, replaced with a sultry tango. After a moment a sharply dressed tango dancer, JUAN, appears. He seductively moves to SOFIA, circles her, and removes apron - which includes her pregnant stomach. SOFIA is now a svelte, sharply dressed version of herself. Another man, TANGO DANCER 1, enters and sweeps the now beaming SOFIA into his arms. They begins to dance. Another young woman, MARIA, enters, also wearing the flashy costume of a tango dancer. After a few flashy moves they are joined by other couples - TANGO DANCERS - until the stage is a swirl of tango. After a few moments TANGO DANCERS exit, couple by couple, and are replaced with factory workers (the same actors, different costumes) who continue to dance, but now with their sewing machines and clothing dummies. SOFIA struggles to stay in her dance fantasy with TANGO DANCER 2, but eventually he fades and exits as her dance vision is replaced with the factory again. Tango music ands and SOFIA is on the factory floor, surrounded by her fellow workers hard at work. A whistle sounds, and the workers and SOFIA begin a break.

As the other workers leave SOFIA pulls out her a small bag with a snack, plants herself on a stool, excitedly picks up a television remote, and turns on a "television." Sweeping shmaltzy music, sweeps through the room.

Song: "MI CORAZON."

TELEVISION SINGERS.

MI CORAZÓN ES UN CAZADOR DE AMOR

PERO ENCONTRARÁ LO QUE DESEA

ESTA VIDA ESTA LLENA DE PENA

PARA LOS QUE SON FIELES COMO NOSOTROS

Lisa Hori-Garcia as SOPHIA, Brian Rivera as TANGO DANCER Photo by Rog Franklin

Suddenly an extravagantly dressed woman, MARIA, runs on, followed by JUAN. (Both are part of the television show SOFIA is watching.) JUAN and MARIA move and speak in an exaggerated, melodramatic telenovela style.

JUAN

¡Maria, espera!
(Maria, wait!)

MARIA

¡Oh, Juan, no!
(Oh, Juan, no!)

JUAN

¿Por qué, por qué corres de mí?
(Why, why do you run from me?)

MARIA

¡Corré porque me persigues!
(I run... because you chase me!)

JUAN

¡Pero la persigo porque vos correis!
(But I chase you because you run!)

MARIA

Y por eso corro!
(And that is why I run!)

SOFIA

(to television)

I wouldn't run, Juan. I'd let you catch me every day!

MARIA

Mi amor es como un caballo salvajeÉ que corre libremente.
(My love is like a wild horse... it must run free.)

MANNY, a young security guard, enters, notices television show. MANNY, is clearly just as involved in the soap opera as SOFIA, joins her watching the television..

JUAN

¡Y mi amor es como un vaquero que montará su caballo del amor con la silla de pasión!
(And my love is like a cowboy that will ride your horse of love with the saddle... of passion!)

MANNY

(excitedly)

What'd I miss?

SOFIA
(breathlessly)
Maria is telling Juan she can't marry him!

SOFIA translates the show for MANNY, who gasps at each bit of drama.

MARIA
Acabo de enterrar a mi padre -

SOFIA
She just buried her father -

MARIA
Mi hermana tiene amnesia-

SOFIA
Her sister has amnesia -

MARIA
Los narco-terroristas han secuestrado mi hermano -

SOFIA
Her brother was kidnapped by narco terrorists and -

MARIA
Y voy a tener un bebé, y no sé quién es el papá!

JUAN
¡Epah!

SOFIA
Madre de Dios!

MANNY
What? What?!

SOFIA
(dramatically)
I can't tell you! It will break your corazón!

DONELLA and JOE, two more workers, enter the break room arguing. DONELLA is a matter-of-fact, salt-of-the-earth thirties/ forties, and JOE is a gruff but passionate older worker clearly worried.

DONELLA
(to JOE)
You always be sayin' that! Always doomin' and gloomin'.

DONELLA joins MANNY and SOFIA watching the television.

JOE
I'm telling you it's gonna get worse! This factory used to be full of people, union workers-

MANNY AND SOFIA
(to JOE)
Shhhh!

JUAN
Oh, Maria!

MANNY AND SOFIA
(to television)
Oh, Juan!

JOE
Just because something happened in the past don't mean it ain't important!

SOFIA, dONELLA, AND MANNY
Shhhh!

DONELLA
What's going on?

MANNY
(to DONELLA)
Maria just told Juan she can't marry him because she just buried her father, her sister has amnesia, her brother was kidnapped and -

MANNY looks at SOFIA.

SOFIA
She's pregnant!

MANNY
¡Susmariosep!
(What a tragedy!)

DONELLA
Was it that dog, Carlos? (to television) I told you: girl, never go out with the evil twin!

JUAN
Oh, Maria!
(JUAN spits)

MARIA, MANNY, DONELLA AND SOFIA
Oh, Juan!

JOE grabs the remote and turns off the TV. JUAN and MARIA exit..

SOFIA, MANNY, AND DONELLA
Hey!

JOE
You three sit here every break watchin' soap operas -

SOFIA
Telenovelas -

JOE
Whole economy is crashin' down around our ears, country losin' jobs left and right, and what are the workers doin'? Watchin' TV! Have you noticed that you're the only three stitchers left in the whole damn place?

DONELLA
I'm gonna notice my foot in your ass you don't give me that remote -

JOE
Back when I first started here -

DONELLA
(exasperated)
Here we go!

JOE
That's right, here we go! Jenkin's Clothing - and there were hundreds of workers here! Every piece of clothing was made right here - first thread to last.

DONELLA
But then a meteor hit the earth, and all the dinosaurs died -

MANNY laughs.

JOE
This ain't no joke!

MANNY
Joe, those days are gone -

DONELLA
Dead and gone!

MANNY
It's not even Jenkin's Clothing anymore. Now it's Peaceweavers -

Sound cue of wind chimes

SOFIA, DONELLA, AND MANNY
(as if reciting a commercial tagline)
New Age Urban Hempwear!

JOE
Donella, you should know better!

DONELLA
Give me that remote!

DONELLA lunges for the remote in JOE's hand, but he dodges her.

JOE
Sofia, you don't know cuz when they fired everybody else you were still down in Mexico-

SOFIA
Argentina!

JOE
All we do here is sew buttons, hems, and tags that say "Finished in USA!" And the only reason we still do that is because a couple of black folks, a Filipino, and a Mexican-

SOFIA
Argentine!

JOE
Look a hell of a lot better than some overseas Chinese sweatshop to the customers of Peaceweavers -

Sound cue of wind chimes

SOFIA, DONELLA, AND MANNY
(again, a tagline)
New Age Urban Hempwear!

DONELLA
All I know is I got me a job. I got two mouths to feed at home, and I ain't got time to worry 'bout nothin' else.

JOE
Listen, I saw... that woman! The one from corporate headquarters! She's in the office. I ain't seen her since... the last big lay-off!

DONELLA
You always seein' somethin'. Give me that remote!

DONELLA lunges for the remote again, but JOE keeps it from her

SOFIA
We're missing the show!

JOE
(running with remote)
No, no, no, no...

MANNY
Hey, everybody, calm down...

DONELLA
That's right, that's right, we should all just calm down. You know, Joe, you got a good point when you say -

DONELLA suddenly, apparently, twists her ankle.

DONELLA

Ow!

JOE crosses to help.

JOE

Donella, you okay?

DONELLA quickly grabs the remote from JOE's hand and tosses it to SOFIA.

DONELLA

Quick! Turn on the TV!

SOFIA turns on set and tosses the remote to MANNY. Shmaltzy music swells as JUAN and MARIA run.

MARIA

¿Cuanto tiempo ha sabido -
(How long have you known-)

JUAN

- que no puedo ser el padre de votro bebé?
(That I cannot be the father of a baby?)

SOFIA

Oh my goodness!

MANNY AND DONELLA

What?

SOFIA

Juan said he can't be the father!

DONELLA

Why not?

MARIA

¿Cómo sabes?

JOE

Listen -

SOFIA, DONELLA, AND Manny

Shhhh!

JUAN
¡Nunca le dije... un dia, en el trabajo...
(I never told you... one day at work...)

SOFIA
Juan used to work at MacDonald's -

JUAN
En Jack in Box -

SOFIA
Perdón - Jack in Box -

JUAN
Hubo un... accidente!
(There was... an accident!)

SOFIA, MANNY and DONELLA all understand the word "accident," and gasp.

JOE
We got to -

SOFIA, DONELLA and MANNY give JOE a "shut up" gesture.

The CAST Photo by Rog Franklin

JUAN
Mientras calentaba unos nachos, me encontré demasiado cerca del... microwave oven!
(While heating some nachos, I found myself too close to the ... microwave oven!)

JUAN gestures tragically at his groin, as MARIA, SOFIA, DONELLA, and MANNY react.

MARIA
ÁMi amor!

JUAN
ÁMi amor!

JUAN, shamed, exits, followed by MARIA.

SOFIA
Poor Juan!

DONELLA
Poor Juan? Poor Maria! All this time she been gettin' radioactive nookie and didn't even know it!

MANNY
Oh no! I... I used to work at Jack in the Box!

DONELLA
T.M.I.

JOE
This ain't about me! They can't fire me because I'm the only one who knows where everything is! But for the rest of you, don't say I didn't warn you! Mark my words, one day little Ernest Jenkins is gonna walk through that door and say -

ERNESTO, the owner of Peaceweavers, enters. He is wearing loose, light, natural fiber clothing, and has long dreadlocks. ERNESTO gives off a sense of self-satisfied contentment.

ERNESTO
Hola, mis compadres!

MANNY, SOFIA, AND DONELLA
(dutifully)
Hola, Ernesto.

ERNESTO
(pointedly)
Joseph...

JOE
(just as pointedly)
Ernest...

ERNESTO

Compadres -

JOE

"Good Morning" was good enough when yo' daddy ran the place.

ERNESTO

Compadres -

JOE

You ain't Spanish!

ERNESTO snaps at JOE for harshing his mellow, and for a moment we see the prickly Ernest inside the buddha-like ERNESTO.

ERNESTO

Joseph!

ERNESTO pulls out a pair of small meditation bells, "dings" them, and composes himself.

ERNESTO

(smiling, to everyone)

First of all, namaste!

MANNY, SOFIA, AND DONELLA

(dutifully)

Namaste!

JOE

(to ERNESTO)

You ain't Japanese, either!

SOFIA

Shhhh!

ERNESTO

Through your focused energy and getting in touch with source, you have made Peaceweavers the number one producer of fair trade, cruelty free, free range, 100% organic, hemp leisure wear! And you did it by putting love before profit and others before yourselves. Give yourselves a big Om!

ALL BUT JOE

Om!

JOE

Ohhhh, brother!

ERNESTO

You are helping to bring spiritually centered clothing to a world in need of healing! Ommm...

ALL BUT JOE

Ommm...

JOE

Help me Jesus!

ERNESTO angrily"dings" his bells at JOE, then resumes his calm demeanor.

ERNESTO

Wonderful! I feel so at peace with all of you. However, as the I Ching says...

JOE

(suddenly worried)

Uh oh... he's quoting the I Ching!

ERNESTO

"Change is certain, for peace is always followed by disturbance..."

JOE

(to others)

You know somebody's gettin' fired when he starts quotin'.

ERNESTO

Even here, in our golden circle of light, we have to make changes if we are going to survive...

JOE

When he fired all the women on the third floor, he did a whole chapter from "The Secret."

ERNESTO

Mis compadres, my chi is greatly disturbed, for I must make a very difficult decision.

JOE

Here it comes...

The room is very tense for a moment.

ERNESTO

Manny...

MANNY

What? Me? What?

ERNESTO

I'm sorry.

MANNY

I'm ... fired?

ERNESTO puts an arm around MANNY's shoulders.

ERNESTO
Fired... yes, Manny, you are fired - like a rocket of hope into the future! Like a clay pot in the kiln of potential! Like the imagination of a child looking at the moon for the first time!

MANNY
Okay...

ERNESTO
(perkily)
And, to help make this transition easier, your two weeks notice will be retroactive from two weeks ago!

ALL BUT ERNESTO
What?

ERNESTO
This way you won't have to be surrounded with all the negative energy of us seeing you unemployed...

MANNY
But -

ERNESTO enfolds MANNY in a suffocating embrace.

ERNESTO
Don't thank me... Just go.

ERNESTO releases MANNY.

SOFIA
Manny-

MANNY
It's okay. I... I wanted to spend more time with my tita anyway. She's been sick and she needs me to be around.

ERNESTO
See? It all worked out fine! Okay, everyone, group hug!

ERNESTO gathers the workers in to an awkward huddle. JOE is clearly uncomfortable with the hugging.

JOE
I liked it more when we just got fired.

ERNESTO
(cheerfully)
Okay, everybody! Say bye to Manny!

DONELLA, AND JOE
Bye, Manny.

SOFIA

Ciao, Manny.

MANNY

I better get my stuff...

ERNESTO suddenly pulls out an already packed bag of MANNY's stuff.

MANNY

Oh... thanks...

ERNESTO

Five more minutes, then back to saving the world one pair of hemp drawstring pants at a time!

ERNESTO "dings" his bells, exits.

DONELLA

Wow, Manny, that sucks.

MANNY

I'll be okay. Guess this means I won't miss any more episodes of "Cazador de Amor" for a while.

SOFIA

That's right.

MANNY

And I'll find another job soon.

SOFIA

Course you will...

MANNY

And if not... my cousin back in Luzón said there's an American factory opening in town...

MANNY starts to leave, stops.

MANNY

It's weird. My parents came all this way, Manila to America, for jobs, so I'd be born in a land of opportunity. Just a factory job. Now all the stuff is made back there. They coulda saved the airfare.

MANNY exits, as the other workers sadly go to their workstations to the sound of the television. (The television voices from this point are in English.)

MARIA (V.O.)

Oh, Juan!

JUAN (v.o.)

Oh, Maria!

MARIA (V.O.)
¡Oh, Juan, Juan! How could I ever think of bringing an innocent baby into a world so cruel, so inhumano?

JUAN (v.o.)
(tragically)
So full of microwaves!

MARIA (V.O.)
Oh, Juan!

JUAN (V.O.)
Oh, Maria!

MARIA (V.O.)
Juan!

JUAN (V.O.)
Maria!

The work horn sounds, break ends. JOE turns off the TV, and JOE, DONELLA, and SOFIA get to work.

SCENE 2

IN THE OFFICE OF ERNESTO JENKINS

Overlooking the factory floor. Waiting impatiently in the office is a severe looking woman, MS. GACHS. ERNESTO enters, seemingly distraught. Below SOFIA, DONELLA, and JOE are herd at work.

ERNESTO
Another worker fired, Ms. Gachs, and my mellow completely harshed!

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins -

ERNESTO
If only you knew the weight of my responsibility -

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins -

ERNESTO
Put on some new age instrumental music.

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins!

ERNESTO
I can't think without new age instrumental music!

GACHS
Fine. Where is it?

ERNESTO hands GACHS a remote.

ERNESTO
Just play anything on my "Chillax" playlist.

GACHS presses a button, and music starts.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)
Every time I have to fire someone, Ms. Gachs, it hurts me right here, in my heart chakra!

GACHS
You've fired one hundred and forty-seven.

ERNESTO
I have a big chakra.

GACHS
That's a good start, but we still have a financial problem, Mr. Jenkins. I've come from corporate headquarters to talk about the merger -

ERNESTO
(reacting to the music)
Sing to me, Enya...

GACHS
Jenkin's Clothing International has been putting together this merger with Amalgamated Apparel Unlimited for months -

ERNESTO
(sining along)
"Sail away, sail away, sail away..."

GACHS
There is quite a bit of money riding on this merger -

ERNESTO
Money, money, money! Why is everyone so focused on money? The corporation, you, the workers... Quick - change playlists! Cool jazz!

GACHS finds another song, presses button. ERNESTO assumes a cool persona.

Rotimi Agbabiaka as ERNESTO, Maggie Mason as GACHS, Michael Gene Sullivan as JOE
Photo by John Kokosa

ERNESTO
Yes... money, Ms. Gachs... what does that even mean?

GACHS
It means Amalgamated's shareholders want to be sure Jenkin's Clothing is financially responsible before they approve the merger.

ErNESTO
But Peaceweavers is profitable!

GACHS
It's not about profit, Mr. Jenkins. It's about cutting cost.

ERNESTO
What do they want at corporate headquarters? I can't squeeze any more out of this place!

GACHS
Well, there are some personal areas where you could cut expenses. Clothing budget, $52,000 -

ErNESTO
(indicating himself)
Sensitive skin -

GACHS
Private chef, $37,000 -

ERNESTO
Vegan food, very tricky -

GACHS
$180,000, - Sports car, -

ERNESTO
Tesla! Good for the environment!

GACHS turns off the music.

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins, the only reason the Corporation created Peaceweavers was to give Jenkin's International a green facade. And you were put in charge to move the jobs offshore while keeping the hippies happy.

ERNESTO takes the remote, turns off music.

ERNESTO
I'm doing everything I can, Ms. Gachs. But sometimes I just have to flow with the rhythm!

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins -

ERNESTO

Reggae playlist!

ERNESTO presses button on remote.

Song: "THE BOTTOM LINE"

ERNESTO

THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH GOOD ONE MAN CAN DO.

IF YOU EVER KNEW WHAT I HAD TO GO THROUGH.

TO KEEP MY SPIRIT FREE

WITH THE WORLD ON MY SHOULDERS,

BALANCING MY CHI

WITH THE NEEDS OF SHAREHOLDERS.

SOFIA, DONELLA, AND JOE

THEY CAN TALK ABOUT PEACE,

THEY CAN TALK ABOUT LOVE,

BUT WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE

ALL BUT ERNESTO

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM -

ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE!

ERNESTO

NOTHING'S MORE DIVINE

THEN GETTING WHAT'S MINE!

ALL BUT ERNESTO

ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE.

DONELLA

LOW COST LABOR

LOWERS PRICES FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS,

GACHS

DESPITE THEIR LIBERAL RAVINGS

IT'S THE SAVINGS THAT THEY SAVOR!

SOFIA

SO THEY PACK UP ALL THE FACTORIES

AND MOVE THEM OFFSHORE,

JOE

AND WE WONDER WHY WE DON'T HAVE

ANY JOBS HERE ANY MORE.

ERNESTO

WE CAN TALK ABOUT TOGETHERNESS

THE WORLD AS ONE

ALL BUT ERNESTO

BUT WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM

ALL

ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE

ERNESTO

NOTHING'S MORE DIVINE THEN GETTING WHAT'S MINE

ALL BUT ERNESTO

ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE

ERNESTO
(indicating workers)
I can't let my last compadres go...

GACHS
Then I guess the corporation can't continue to pay for your special holistic therapy -

ERNESTO turns the music off.

ERNESTO
You mean...?

GACHS
The Happy Endings Massage Parlor!

ERNESTO is horrified.

ERNESTO
Alright! I... need my happy endings. I'll move the factory!

GACHS
Thank you, Mr. Jenkins.

GACHS exits. ERNESTO turns the music back on.

ERNESTO

WE CAN TALK ABOUT TOGETHERNESS

THE WORLD AS ONE

BUT WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE

WE'RE STILL ALL ABOUT THE BOTTOM

ALL

ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE

ERNESTO rings his bells to clear his mind, then exits.

SCENE 3

THE FACTORY FLOOR

SOFIA, DONELLA, and JOE are hard at work.

JOE
(indicating television)
All I'm sayin' is why don't they ever do any shows about what really goes on - people losin' jobs, gettin' foreclosed on, families goin' hungry? Why don't they make a soap opera about that?

SOFIA
Telenovelas are about what is really important in life.

JOE
What's really important in a rich person's life! Manny just got fired -

The whistle blows to start the break, and SOFIA and DONELLA rush to turn on the TV.

MARIA (V.O.)
Oh, Juan! The ransom has been paid! The narco-terrorists have set my brother free!

JUAN (V.O.)
Gracias á Dios! Now, at last, we can be married!

MARIA (V.O.)
But now, my mother...

JUAN (V.O.)
Has she been kidnapped too?

MARIA (V.O.)
She has come down with amnesia!

JUAN (V.O.)
Just like your sister!

SOFIA
(to JOE)
Amnesia runs in her family.

JUAN (V.O.)
When did it start?

MARIA (V.O.)
I...I can't remember! ¡Madre de Dios!

SOFIA
¡Madre de Dios!

DONELLA

¡Madre de Dios!

ERNESTO enters, picks up remote, turns off the TV. He speaks to the worker as New-Age chipper as ever.

ERNESTO

Hola, mis compadres!

SOFIA AND DONELLA

Hola, Ernesto.

ERNESTO

Joseph...

JOE

Ernest...

ERNESTO

First, let me say that it is only through our hard work and Reiki balanced, harmonic convergence that Peaceweavers is what it is today!

JOE

How do you say that with a straight face?

ERNESTO

But, as Gandhi said -

ALL BUT ERNESTO

Oh uh...

ERNESTO

"Happiness is when what you think, say, and do are all in harmony."

JOE

(to SOFIA and DONELLA)

Well, I'm gonna miss one of ya'll.

ERNESTO

So, to achieve inner harmony, and with an even heavier chi than before -

DONELLA

(impatiently)

What?!

ERNESTO

I've decided to close the factory.

SOFIA, DONELLA and JOE are shocked.

SOFIA

Cómo?

ERNESTO
You have two whole weeks to disassemble your machines so we can ship them to their new home.

DONELLA
Two weeks notice?

ERNESTO
Donella, you are much too caught up in the whole time thing. Two weeks, tomorrow, yesterday... Just be here, now. Then, in two weeks, be somewhere else!

JOE
But... ya'll promised me ... I been in this factory for more 'n 30 years!

ERNESTO
And I am releasing you to find your bliss.

JOE
I don't want bliss! I want health insurance!

SOFIA
What am I going to do?

JOE
China! I knew you'd move the factory to China, Ernest!

ERNESTO
Joseph! How could you think for a moment that I would be part of exploiting the workers of China! We're moving to Tibet. The little village of Qamdo, where the purest Buddhist spiritualism will be sewn into every blouse.

JOE
For 60 cents an hour!

ERNESTO
52.

DONELLA
I'll wreak this machine before I help you move it!

ERNESTO
It sounds like someone has planted the Seeds of Hatred in our Garden of Peace...

SOFIA, DONELLA and JOE turn menacingly on ERNESTO, who is clearly frightened.

ERNESTO
Security!

ERNESTO rings his bells, and MANNY enters, now wearing a security guard's uniform.

SOFIA
Manny!

ERNESTO
Manny is my new security guru. He will make sure nothing unfortunate happens to the machines before their trip to the sacred Himalayas.

DONELLA
Guru?

MANNY
I'm sorry! I... I need the money!

SOFIA
You can't take my job from me!

ERNESTO speaks solemnly, with all the spirituality he can muster.

ERNESTO
I'm not taking your job, I'm giving you freedom! I'm... trying to free your mind. But I can only show you the door. You're the one that has to walk through it.

DONELLA
Wait a minute...that's from the Matrix!

ERNESTO
(to DONELLA, again trying to be spiritual)
Uh... luminous beings are we, not this crude matter -

JOE
Empire Strikes Back!

ERNESTO
(to ALL)
Don't let passion make us take sides against each other! Our great mother Eywa does not take sides.

ALL BUT ERNESTO
Avatar!

ERNESTO finally drops his facade

ERNESTO
There's nothing we can do! It's the global economy, and, the sooner you all accept it, the better.

DONELLA
You were right, Joe... we shoulda... I ... I shoulda.... Oh god!

DONELLA breaks down.

SOFIA
(desperate)
Maybe... maybe they will need someone to scrub the floor. I could do that! If... if they want to sell the building they'll want it clean...

MANNY

Sofia...

JOE

Wait... wait a minute... we gotta do something...

DONELLA

We ain't got nothin', we can't do nothin' -

JOE

No... no! That's how they win, by us doin' nothing! They got us convinced ain't nothin' we can do! Well, I'll tell you, I'll tell you, I'll tell you this - we don't got to take it no more! We don't have to! We got to do somethin'... I don't know what, but we can do somethin' if we... organize!

SOFIA is hit with what seems like a labor pain.

SOFIA

Ow!

MANNY

Sofia?

DONELLA

What's wrong?

JOE

We need us some solidarity!

SOFIA is hit with another pain.

SOFIA

Ow!

JOE

We have to work collectively!

SOFIA is hit with another, bigger pain.

SOFIA

Ungh!

DONELLA

Is the baby coming?

JOE

We have to unite!

SOFIA is hit with an even bigger pain and, this time, smacks MANNY. SOFIA collapses on the ground, attended by DONELLA.

ERNESTO

(to MANNY)

Get up! (to SOFIA) And you - get out!

SOFIA

I can't -

ERNESTO

I said get out!

JOE

No!

ERNESTO

What?

JOE notices that SOFIA is seated.

JOE

Sit down strike! Great idea, Sofia! Come on, Donella!

ERNESTO

Joe! After everything my family's done for you -

JOE

You ain't done nothin' for me but pay me in exchange for my work! Now you want to toss me aside, like I'm good for nothin'? I'll tell you who's good for nothin'... YOU!

ERNESTO

You can't just -

IOE

We are joining our comrade Sofia on the floor, and we ain't movin' 'til our demands are met!

DONELLA

We got demands?

JOE

We do now!

JOE and DONELLA sit next to SOFIA.

JOE

(singing)

"We shall not be, we shall not be moved..."

ERNESTO

Manny, get them up!

MANNY

I don't know, Ernesto -

ERNESTO
Call me Mr. Jenkins! Look, people... friends, compadres!... hola! Is this really the vibration we want to send out to the universe? I think it was Martin Luther King who said... Get outta my factory!

DONELLA
He did not say that!

ERNESTO
You can't do this! This is... revolution!

ERNESTO tries to grab SOFIA, but SOFIA is hit with the biggest of pains, swings her arm, and inadvertently knocks ERNESTO out.

MANNY
Mr. Jenkins! What should I do?

DONELLA
How should we know? You're the guru!

JOE
Quick, take him to the hospital!

MANNY
Good idea! This way, Mr. Jenkins...

MANNY carries ERNESTO out, and as soon as they leave JOE races to the door.

JOE
Come on, lock the doors!

DONELLA
Why?

JOE
When he wakes up he is gonna call the cops, have us all arrested! You and me will go to jail, and they'll be sending Sofia back to Mexico!

DONELLA
Argentina!

JOE
Wherever!

DONELLA
So, what now? They're locked out, but we're locked in!

JOE
I don't know! I'm thinking...

Pause.

DONELLA

You still thinkin'?

JOE

Yes!

Pause.

DONELLA

(to SOFIA)

I ain't seen him this quiet, this long since that time he had strep throat.

JOE

I'm thinking!

SOFIA

(groggily)

Ocupado...

DONELLA

What?

SOFIA

Factory... occupied...

DONELLA

What does that mean?

SOFIA

It's... it's... take control. The workers take over...

JOE

And... run it... themselves!

DONELLA

There's gotta be a law against that!

JOE

Plenty of them! But we have been following their laws, their rules all this time, and what do have to show for it? We ain't got nothin' to lose, we might as well do what we can!

DONELLA

So... what are we going to do?

JOE

I guess we're... we're... (frightened at the thought) taking over the factory..!

SOFIA has another big pain.

DONELLA

We should call a doctor!

SOFIA

No... no!

DONELLA

But all those labor pains -

SOFIA

No! They're not labor pains. Besides, I don't trust doctors - ever since the evil Patty pretended she was Doctor Emily!

JOE

Who did what?

DONELLA

Evil Patty and Doctor Emily, Young and the Restless -

JOE

Another soap opera! Sofia, that is why you don't know nothin' about the struggle -

Another pain, and SOFIA hits both DONELLA and JOE.

JOE

Donella, you better call your family, tell them what's going on!

DONELLA leaves.

Joe (CONT'D)

(to SOFIA)

And you sure you don't want a doctor?

SOFIA

(sadly)

Indelecio. I want... Indelecio!

JOE

You want a what?

SOFIA

Who! He's a who. It's a name - Indelecio. There is...(melodramatically) a story...

JOE

We ain't got time for a story!

SOFIA is now out of her pain, and has shifted to a melodramatic, telenovella storytelling. Overwrought, dramatic music has begun.

SOFIA

You are right, there is no time -

JOE

We got a lot of stuff to do -

SOFIA

No time! For it is a long story...

JOE
That's what I'm saying, we ain't got -

SOFIA
You say I know nothing of struggle, of the workers united? Ha, I say! Ha! That is all I have to say!

JOE
Good.

SOFIA
It all happened back home, in Buenos Aires -

JOE
(exasperated, give up)
Oh, great.

SOFIA
In the barrio of... Posibilidad! Dark... it is so dark...

jOE
It's not that dark.

SOFIA
Do you want to hear this or not?

JOE
No.

SOFIA
It is a dark night... the kind of dark darkness that is darkest when there is a complete lack of light...

JOE
Damn, that's dark!

SOFIA
But then, into that darkness there came a light -

Tango music swells as INDELECIO, a dashing young man, dances on.

INDELECIO
Sofia, my love!

SOFIA and INDELECIO dance seductively together as they speak. As they dance SOFIA's pregnant belly is removed, and she is her younger self again.

SOFIA
Strong, handsome - the kind of boy every girl in the barrio of Posibilidad desired -

INDELECIO
But only you, Sofia, can ever have!

SOFIA
His name was Indelecio. And our love was... forbidden!

INDELECIO
(dramatically)
Forbidden!

SOFIA
We had to meet in secret, in shadows.

JOE
Well, that's kinda romantic!

SOFIA
This time we were meeting in the office of the textile mill where we worked together.

JOE
(deflated)
So much for romance.

SOFIA
Oh, Indelecio, my love, I cannot wait until I can give myself to you... body and soul!

INDELECIO
Sofia, when I look into your shining face, to me it is like looking at the brilliant, golden dawn as the sun rises over the Puerto Madero... and I want to wake each morning of my life to the sunrise of your face.

JOE
Woah!

SOFIA
You see why I loved him!

JOE
With a line like that I'd fall for him!

INDELECIO
Sofia, I burn for the day we can join as one!

SOFIA
(tragically)
But that day may never come!

JOE
What kinda name is Indelectible?

SOFIA
Indelecio!

INDELECIO
Why is your mother standing in the way of our love? Is it because I am too young?

SOFIA
No...

JOE
No...

INDELECIO
Is it because I am a mere textile worker?

SOFIA
No...

JOE
No...

INDELECIO
Is it because I am... Comunista?

JOE
You were dating a commie?

SOFIA
(to JOE)
Yes,
(to INDELECIO)
And no! It is because -

INDELECIO AND jOE
Why?

SOFIA
Because you are a fan of Rio de la Plata!

JOE
What the hell does that mean?

SOFIA
My mother is a Boca fan!

This means nothing to JOE

SOFIA
Fútbol? Soccer? Both teams are from Buenos Aires! Come on! Rio de la Plata and the Boca Juniors! It's the biggest soccer rivalry in the world!

JOE
Oh...

SOFIA

If my mother finds out I am in love with a Rio fan, she will send me away! We are divided forever...

INDELECIO

By a white leather ball!

They tenderly embrace, kiss, and dance a slow, passionate tango.

EL PATRÓN (OFFSTAGE)

Idiotas! Idiots!

SOFIA

Someone is coming!

JOE

Girl, you better hide!

SOFIA, INDELECIO, and JOE, hide as EL PATRÓN enters.

SCENE 4

A FLASHBACK

IN THE OFFICE OF EL PATRON

A well-dressed, middle-aged man, EL PATRÓN, enters. He warily looks around, locks the door, then goes to a loose tile in the floor. As SOFIA and INDELECIO watch EL PATRÓN removes the floor tile, opens a floor safe, and pulls out large bundles of cash, which he packs into a briefcase.

EL PATRÓN
They think they can take my money... tell me how to run my business... my life! ¡Boludo! I will show them! Three generations we have run this mill, and I will not -

As EL PATRÓN packs his case, SOFIA tries to pull INDELECIO from the room. INDELECIO stops when he sees the cash. EL PATRÓN hears, and turns.

EL PATRÓN *(cont.)*
What are you two doing here?

SOFIA
Nothing, El Patrón!

INDELECIO
We could ask you the same question...

EL PATRÓN
Get out of my office... ¡vayense!

EL PATRÓN goes to the desk and starts loading up the briefcase.

INDELECIO
That's a lot of cash. Going on vacation?

EL PATRÓN
I'm getting out of this stinking place!

SOFIA
Posibilidad?

EL PATRÓN
Posibilidad, Buenos Aires, Argentina!

INDELECIO
With our money?

EL PATRÓN
Your money? First the banks say it is theirs, now it is yours?

Lisa Hori-Garcia as SOPHIA, Brian Rivera as INDELECIO, Maggie Mason as EL PATRON
Photo by Rog Franklin

INDELECIO
You haven't paid us in three weeks!

EL PATRÓN
It is my money! The banks! And those idiots in the Presidential Palace! For years they told us, "You want to be rich, rich like the North Americans? Well, you must borrow money to make money! That's how they do it on Wall Street!" And when we could not pay them back they said, "Mortgage your business, that's how they do it in New York!" And when all the businesses can't pay, the IMF comes with a big loan to solve all our little loans! And when that bill comes due and we cannot pay, they come from the north and they take everything! Buildings, streets -

INDELECIO
The government -

El PATRON
- but it's okay, because that's the way they do it in the U.S.!" Well, it's not okay! And I am getting out before they take everything I have!

EL PATRÓN goes to the door with the briefcase.

SOFIA
That is our money! You owe us!

EL PATRÓN
Que Barbaridad! I owe you nothing.

EL PATRÓN exits. SOFIA falls weeping into INDELECIO'S arms.

SOFIA
Indelecio... what is going to happen?

INDELECIO
The bank will shut the mill!

SOFIA
Then what?

INDELECIO
Then? There are no more jobs in Posibilidad. All the factories have already cut back or are closed!

SOFIA
The steel plant, the ceramic factory... all gone... What are we going to do?

SOFIA weeps, and INDELECIO takes her in his arms to comfort her. Just then a woman, CLAUDIA, SOFIA'S mother, enters. CLAUDIA is feisty, athletic, is wearing the blue and yellow colors of a boca fan, and is carrying a soccer ball. Seeing SOFIA and INDELECIO in each others arms CLAUDIA is dramatically indignant.

Claudia
What... is going on here?

SOFIA and INDELECIO quickly separate.

SOFIA
¡Mamá!

CLAUDIA
I get back from the game and you are gone - no note, no message -

SOFIA
Mamá, I have to tell you -

CLAUDIA
Tia Maria said she saw you come back to the mill with -

INDELECIO
Hello, Mamá Claudia.

CLAUDIA
(scornfully)
Indelecio… *(Suddenly shocked)* Wait... what are you two doing here, alone... in the dark?

SOFIA
Mamá, something has happened -

CLAUDIA
It has? Oh my god, no! Sofia... were you two... listening to fútbol?

SOFIA
No! We were making love!

CLAUDIA
Don't lie to me! He's got my baby cheering for Rio de la Plata!

INDELECIO
I swear on my honor, I only came here to have sex with your daughter!

CLAUDIA
(to Heaven)
Oh, Hector - I tried to raise her to be a good Boca girl -

SOFIA
We didn't even listen to the game! I was trying to get his pants off!

INDELECIO
And that's when we heard him come in!

CLAUDIA
(horrified)
Two men? Cheering for that team with two men? At the same time?
(to INDELECIO)
What kind of pervert have you turned my Sofia into?

SOFIA
He was stealing!

CLAUDIA
Who?

SOFIA
¡El Patrón! He said the mill was bankrupt, he was taking the money, and there was nothing we could do about it.

SOFIA points to the floor safe. CLAUDIA goes to the safe, and sees it is empty.

CLAUDIA
It is empty!

INDELECIO
¡Bastardo!

CLAUDIA
Did... did he say anything else?

SOFIA
He said the money was his, that he owed us nothing!

CLAUDIA
We have worked for weeks without pay -

INDELECIO
And we will never see a centavo of it!

CLAUDIA
Wait...

SOFIA
¿Mamá…?

CLAUDIA
Wait... we must think...

INDELECIO
El Patrón is gone, the jobs are gone... Sofia! Now... now is the time for La Revolución!

SOFIA
¿La Revolución?

INDELECIO
The Capitalists are fleeing and their system is crumbling! Now is the time to seize power, before we are too hungry and weak to lift our rifles!

CLAUDIA
(laughing)
Always flashy and impatient. That is why your team always comes up short...

INDELECIO
Better than you Boca losers!

Oh no he didn't...

CLAUDIA
Losers? 1986, World Cup Champions, 33 professional championships -

INDELECIO

You want World Cups? Ha! 1977, 2000, and 2003!

SOFIA
Ya! We have to figure out what to do!

CLAUDIA and INDELECIO tensely stop arguing, for the moment.

CLAUDIA
You are right, my daughter.

SOFIA
How can we tell everyone their jobs are gone? Tell them the mill is shutting down?

CLAUDIA
How can we...?

A long pause, as the SOFIA, INDELECIO, and CLAUDIA go to separate corners thinking. Suddenly -

CLAUDIA
We won't!

INDELECIO
¿Mamá Claudia?

CLAUDIA
We won't let it shut down! Sofia, remember I told you about those women? The ones in the Brukman textile mill?

SOFIA
¡Che!

INDELECIO
The Brukman Mill, I've heard of it!

CLAUDIA
The owners went bankrupt. They gambled on Argentina's New Economic model and lost! Then they walked off with all the money and abandoned the mill. But, when the workers found out, they did not leave. They took it over and formed a collaborative!

INDELECIO
They run it themselves - no boss, everyone paid the same!

CLAUDIA
Could we do that?

SOFIA
Could we?

CLAUDIA
There is nothing in this mill we do not know how to do-

INDELECIO
Except get paid too much and steal from the workers!

SOFIA
¡Che!

Underscore for "Esta es Nuestra Lucha" begins.

CLAUDIA

This place was built with our labor, and with the labor of my parents and he abandons it? Well, this mill is not El Patrón's anymore - it is ours!

Song: "ESTA ES"

CLAUDIA

THROUGHOUT MY DAYS -

I HAVE SEEN SHATTERED PROMISES

AND ECHOES OF HOPES THAT WERE LED ASTRAY.

WITH ALL MY SOUL -

I HAVE PRAYED THAT MY CHILD

MIGHT KNOW A BETTER WORLD THAN I HAVE KNOWN.

THE DREAM REMAINS -

AS LONG AS THERE'S BREATH IN MY LUNGS

AND THE BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH MY VEINS!

ALL

FROM HILL TO PLAIN -

OUR WORKERS WILL RISE

AND OUR NATION WILL BE REBORN AGAIN

ESTA ES NUESTRA LUCHA

ESTO ES NUESTRO TIEMPO

THIS IS OUR STRUGGLE,

THIS IS OUR TIME -

SOFIA

TO STAND AS ONE!

WITH OUR FATES BOUND TOGETHER

NO MORE COULD THEY DIVIDE US.

CLAUDIA

OUR PEOPLE'S DREAMS -

WILL RISE FROM THEIR SLUMBER

TO MARCH BESIDE US.

INDELECIO

NOW IS OUR TIME!

LET OUR VOICES RING CLEAR

WITH A MESSAGE TO ALL!

ALL

THIS IS THE CALL -

THE OLD WAYS ARE DYING,

AND A NEW WORLD IS RISING AS THEY FALL!

ESTA ES NUESTRA LUCHA,

ESTO ES NUESTRO TIEMPO.

THIS IS OUR STRUGGLE,

THIS IS OUR TIME!

CLAUDIA

But the policía, the government, they'll try to get us out of the mill -

INDELECIO

Che, they'll try - but we will be ready for them. Any policía comes in here, I will kick his ass!

CLAUDIA

(mockingly)

Well, I hope you kick ass better than Rio de la Plata kicks the ball...

CLAUDIA and INDELECIO passionately resume their futbol argument.

INDELECIO
24 professional championships! 18 international titles, a world record 40 consecutive victories -

CLAUDIA
Torneo Clausura Champions 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008 -

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
Enough!

CLAUDIA looks at INDELECIO with newfound respect, then gets back to the task at hand.

CLAUDIA
We must call a meeting of the workers right away. We have to convince the others about the collaborative before the bank finds out that the money to pay the debts is gone and they seize the building.

INDELECIO
¡Che!

CLAUDIA
We must occupy the mill tonight. All of us must move in, lock the doors, live here so they cannot take it back. Which means the two of you will not be able to sneak off and cheer for Rio de la Plata!

SOFIA
It was only sex!

CLAUDIA
Well, from now on you will have your "sex" where I can keep an eye on you!

CLAUDIA and INDELECIO exit as the flashback ends, and SOFIA puts her pregnant belly on again..

Lisa Hori-Garcia as SOPHIA, Velina Brown as MAMA CLAUDIA, Brian Rivera as INDELECIO
Photo by Rog Franklin

SCENE 5

THE FACTORY FLOOR.

SOFIA, in the present and pregnant, speaks to JOE.

SOFIA
At first we just wanted to keep our jobs, that's all. The mill may have been built with El Patrón's bricks, but it was the workers who held it together with our blood, our sweat, and our tears.

JOE
Sounds messy.

SOFIA
So do not say to me that I know nothing of struggle! I have HAD more struggle, SEEN more struggle, BEEN more struggle than you shall ever have, see, or be! There is no time for me to tell you of all my struggle!

JOE
That's too bad, because -

SOFIA
(melodramatically, again)
It was a bright day -

JOE
Oh, god!

MANNY enters.

MANNY
Hey guys.

JOE
How'd you get in?

MANNY
Donella let me in. I took Ernesto to the hospital and calmed him down. Maybe you could call him, straighten things out.

JOE
Ain't nothing to straighten!

MANNY
He said he wanted to talk... at least that's what I think he said. When he said it, it involved auras, acupuncture, and a dragon.

JOE
Okay, I'll talk... as a representative of the Workers! If that's okay with you Sofia.

SOFIA
Okay.

JOE *leaves*.

SOFIA *(cont'd)*

Hi Manny.

MANNY
(to SOFIA)

It's good to see you.

SOFIA

Good to see you, too.

MANNY

Look, I'm sorry about the whole security guru thing, Sofia.

SOFIA

It's okay, Manny. It's a bad time to be unemployed.

MANNY

Is there ever a good time?

SOFIA

I guess not...

MANNY

So... who do you think is the baby's father?

SOFIA
(embarrassed)

What?

MANNY
(indicating tv)

On "Mi Corazón!" Do you think it's Juan?

SOFIA

I don't think microwaves can stand in the way of a real man's love...

MANNY
(self-consciously)

You think...?

MANNY remembers his time too close to the microwave.

SOFIA

I... I don't know...

MANNY

Sofia... I never asked before... but where is your baby's father?

SOFIA

He's... not here.

MANNY
That's too bad. If I was the father - I mean, if I was to be a father - I'd always be right there for my family. I'm pretty set, now. Now that I've got this job and all... so many factories moving away, there's lotsa work looking after the buildings. Guarding empty buildings is one of the fastest growing jobs in America!

SOFIA
Good for you...

MANNY
So, what I'm saying is, if I was to be in a position to take care of somebody, and a baby, it wouldn't be a problem. I'd be right there.

SOFIA
You will make some girl very happy.

JOE enters, on phone.

JOE
No, no, no! That is completely unacceptable! And I swear, Ernest, if you talk that New Age stuff to me again, I'll find you and I'll stick your bells where the chakra don't shine!
(hangs up) Says he don't have the money to pay severance -

MANNY
Jenkin's Clothing International has plenty of money!

JOE
Says that we don't know how to run Peaceweavers without him -

MANNY
How hard can it be?

JOE
And he was attacked, so he's gonna have the police surround the building!

MANNY
But it was an accident!

JOE
Whose side are you on, anyway?

MANNY
I'm... I was just... I better go.

SOFIA
Manny?

MANNY leaves.

JOE
We don't need them. It's like yer friend Indigestable said-

SOFIA

Indelecio!

JOE

We know how to do everything except get paid too much and steal from the workers! So from now on, we don't got no Bosses, we run the factory ourselves, and we run it for us! And we'll do it democratically! Together! Where's Donella? We got to have a meeting! Right now! We are gonna form us... a Collective!

JOE exits.

SOFIA

Collective?

SCENE 6

A FLASHBACK

THE FACTORY FLOOR OF THE MILL IN POSIBILIDAD

A bustle of activity as WORKERS enter, cleaning and arranging, delivering food and supplies. CLAUDIA enters carrying blankets.

CLAUDIA
Sofia! Help me with these blankets!

SOFIA
More donations from the barrio?

CLAUDIA
Four months and still the people support us! Towels, blankets, two more mattresses!

SOFIA
Gracias á Dios! La revolución and a cold floor is hard on my back.

CLAUDIA
La policía are just waiting for the chance to take this place back from us - so we must not give them that chance! When the government recognizes that this mill is now owned by Pueblo de Posibilidad, then it will be warm beds at home. Until then -

SOFIA
We camp on the front line.

WORKER #2 enters with a bucket, plunger and gloves and hands off supplies to SOFIA, takes folded blankets and exits.

CLAUDIA
So... No "sex" tonight?

SOFIA
Mamá, I'm sorry! Go Boca juniors!

CLAUDIA
I need to talk to your man. You know, he kind of reminds me of my Hector. A little reckless, but a brave heart.

SOFIA
I wish Papá could have met him.

CLAUDIA
Hector would have liked him. He would have kicked his Rio loving ass, but he would have liked him. So, where is your hero? Bathroom duty?

SOFIA
That was last night. Tonight I'm on bathrooms -

CLAUDIA
I'm on kitchen again. Three times this week!

SOFIA
Maybe if you didn't make the best empanadas in the cooperative -

CLAUDIA
I'm not going to argue with that.

SOFIA
Indelecio has child care tonight. Mamá, I think he really likes it!

INDELECIO enters, gently rocking two babies in his arms. He is softly singing.

INDELECIO
("The Internationale")

"ARRIBA, PARIAS DE LA TIERRA,

EN PIE, FAMÉLICA LEGIÓN -"

SOFIA
Indelecio -

INDELECIO
Ssshhhh! I am watching over our future revolutionaries...

CLAUDIA
A man who is good with children is a rare thing. Almost as rare as a Rio team victory...

INDELECIO
(points at CLAUDIA)
Look, little ones - there's the señora I told you about that cheers for Satan...

The babies start crying.

SOFIA
¡Oye!

INDELECIO returns to soothing the babies.

INDELECIO
(softly singing)

"El género humano

es la internacional."

The babies sleep.

CLAUDIA
Indelecio, the finance committee wants you to do something.

INDELECIO
(cooing at the babies)
ÁChe! But we don't have any money.

CLAUDIA
And that is why we want you to meet with the bank.

SOFIA
Him? There must be some mistake!

CLAUDIA
(pointedly)
No mistake. The Committee thinks Indelecio is the perfect person to let the bank know exactly how we feel about taking their money...

INDELECIO
(loudly, passionately)
VENCE -

Babies start crying.

SOFIA
Shhhhh!

INDELECIO
(whispered)
-eremos!

A farmer, THIAGO, enters.

THIAGO
¿Señora Claudia?

CLAUDIA
Shhh!

THIAGO
Chairperson of the Supply Committee? May I have a word?

SOFIA
Go ahead, Mamá. I have to meet with the bathroom detail.

WORKER #2 AND WORKER #1 enter and cross to SOFIA for their bathroom detail lesson.

CLAUDIA
(to INDELECIO)
The banker is in the office. And Indelecio - don't take the babies!

INDELECIO exits.

THIAGO
Señora, my name is Thiago Algodon, and I come from the S.D.E.C.G.A.P.A.C.

CLAUDIA
The what?

THIAGO
The Santiago del Estero Cotton Growers and Pickers Agricultural Cooperative.

Above, in the office overlooking the factory floor, INDELECIO enters with a sharply suited man, the BANKER.

INDELECIO
So, as you can see, the textile mill is running just fine without a boss ordering us around. All the money goes to the workers, and, any extra, we use to hire more people! We are not just making cloth here, we are making jobs! We are making a new model! Without... BANKERS!

INDELECIO defiantly spits at the BANKER's feet.

On the factory floor SOFIA addresses WORKER #1 and WORKER #2

SOFIA
Okay, everybody - don't think of them as the dirty toilets, think of them as our dirty toilets!

On another part of the factory floor CLAUDIA continues her discussion with THIAGO.

CLAUDIA
Another cooperative! How's it working for you?

THIAGO
Well, we have a lot of meetings...

In the office:

INDELECIO
(to BANKER)
"You are the vampires that only live by sucking living labor, and live more the more labor you suck!" Karl Marx!

In CLAUDIA's area:

CLAUDIA
(to THIAGO)
At least you have a product to meet about. Cotton! Here at Posibilidad we have almost run out of cotton...

THIAGO
That is what I want to talk to you about -

In the office:

INDELECIO
(to BANKER)
"Banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies!" Thomas Jefferson!

In SOFIA's area:

SOFIA
(to WORKERS #1 & #2)
Just like each one of us has to take turns planting vegetables in the yard, cooking, or standing guard at night, we each have a job to take care of what is ours -

In CLAUDIA's area:

THIAGO
I bring you cotton from our cooperative!

In the office:

INDELECIO
"It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees!" ¡La Passionaria!

In SOFIA's area:

SOFIA
The Bosses, they say we are lazy, we are filthy, that we do not care about anything but filling our bellies. They do not see the love we have for the things we make with our hands, they do not see the joy we have in our skill with our machines, with our tools. They cannot see it, because they make nothing! From their high office windows they see our tired shoulders, but they do not see pride that burns in our breast when we make something people will use, that they will cherish. That the boss can never see!

In CLAUDIA's area:

CLAUDIA
Gracias, Señor, but we have no money to pay for cotton.

In the office:

INDELECIO
"What is a bigger crime: robbing a bank, or starting a bank?"

INDELECIO again hatefully spits at the BANKER's feet. Bertold Brecht!

In CLAUDIA's area:

THIAGO
No problem. We trust you. When you sell the finished fabric, then you can pay us!

CLAUDIA
If we don't have to pay interest on a bank loan to buy the cotton, we could afford to pay you more after we sell it -

THIAGO
Which would help us pay off our seed loans sooner!

In SOFIA's area:

SOFIA
So, compañeros, take your plungers, your scrub brushes, and use them with pride, because there is no such thing as a dirty job when you are working for el pueblo!

In the office:

INDELECIO
We can do it without bosses, without capitalistas -

CLAUDIA AND SOFIA
And we can do it -

INDELECIO, SOFIA, CLAUDIA, THIAGO
Without banks!

(all spit)

INDELECIO and BANKER exit.

ALL BUT BANKER
¡Adelante!

WORKERS #1 & #2
¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!

CLAUDIA
Let's get your truck unloaded!

THIAGO
Sí!

WORKERS #1 & #2, INDELECIO and BANKER and THIAGO exit. CLAUDIA starts after THIAGO, stops herself. CLAUDIA pulls a slip of paper from her pocket.

CLAUDIA
Un momento por favor... Sofia! Gustavo gave me this note to give to you... I think it is a secret love letter from your man...

SOFIA
A love letter?

CLAUDIA
A secret love letter. It says for you to meet him at the back gate at midnight.

SOFIA

You read it?

CLAUDIA

I'm your mamá. It's my job!

CLAUDIA exits. SOFIA reads her note. Time passes. WORKER #2 sweeps the stage, THIAGO and CLAUDIA enter with a cotton bale, WORKER #1 crosses the stage. When SOFIA is alone again EL PATRÓN silently enters.

EL PATRÓN

Hello, Sofia.

SOFIA

What are you doing here?

EL PATRÓN

You look well. La revolución seems to have given an extra blush to your cheeks.

SOFIA

What is it you want?

EL PATRÓN

Only to thank you from taking such good care of my mill while I was away...

SOFIA

(laughing)

Your mill?

EL PATRÓN

Of course. I have the deed.

SOFIA

It's not yours anymore. This is Pueblo de Posibilidad!!

EL PATRÓN

Pueblo de... (laughs) please! Such revolutionary rhetoric! Reminds me of Hector-

SOFIA

My father?

EL PATRÓN

Hector... he was quite the rabble rouser, too. Always going on about workers' safety, union regulations... so ironic that he had his tragic accidente just before his meeting with the safety inspector... and, of course, to arrange another tragic accidente in the same family would be suspicious...

SOFIA

What?

EL PATRÓN

Suspicious.... But not difficult.

SOFIA
My father... you... you killed -

EL PATRÓN
I must do what I must to keep my property!

SOFIA
But -

Song: "EL PATRÓN".

EL PATRÓN

I OWN THE BUILDING, I OWN THE LAND
I OWN THE TRADEMARK, I OWN THE BRAND!
I OWN ALL THE THINGS MADE BY YOUR HANDS
A SIMPLE THING TO UNDERSTAND.

MEN LIKE ME WE'RE A SPECIAL BREED,
WE FILL A ROLE YOU WILL ALWAYS NEED.
WE LIVE THE LIFE YOU'D KILL TO LEAD!
THE FATTENED CALF YOU LOVE TO FEED.

WHAT WOULD YOU POOR PEOPLE DO
WITHOUT THE RICH TO TAKE CARE OF YOU?

WE PULL THE STRINGS BEHIND THE SCENES,
WE OWN ALL THE PRODUCTION MEANS!
WE TREAT YOU PEASANTS LIKE MACHINES.
THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.

THERE'S NOTHING YOU PEOPLE CAN DO,
UNLESS THE RICH ALLOW YOU TO
YOU WORKERS ARE SO UNREFINED,
YOUR VULGAR NEEDS YOUR CHILDLIKE MINDS,

THE LIVES YOU DREAM OF YOU'LL NEVER FIND,

THAT'S NOT THE WAY THE WORLD'S DESIGNED!

YOUR FATHER WAS A PERFECT CASE...

OF ONE WHO HAD TO LEARN HIS PLACE!

SOFIA slaps El PATRÓN.

SOFIA
My father wasn't afraid of you and neither am I! I am not afraid to die!

EL PATRÓN
Very brave, little Sofia... but who said anything about you?

SOFIA
But... Mamá?

EL PATRÓN
Even with the occupation, she has to leave the factory some time...

SOFIA
What...

EL PATRÓN
Perhaps she will finally join her Hector -

SOFIA
No! What... what do you want?

EL PATRÓN
Very little. You tell us when the guards are least in number so that we'll have less resistance...

SOFIA
I... I cannot -

EL PATRÓN forcefully grabs SOFIA.

EL PATRÓN
Wake up, rojita! One way or another I will take my mill back, and you can make sure only a few get hurt. If not... I will take it back anyway, but, first, another loved one will fall victim to another "accident..."

SOFIA
Bastardo!

EL PATRÓN
I will be in touch...

EL PATRÓN exits. SOFIA cries. INDELECIO enters.

INDELECIO

Sofia? Oh, Sofia, why do you cry?

SOFIA

I cry because.... Oh, Indelecio!

The two hold each other. Slowly the embrace turns into a beautiful, desperate tango.

SCENE 7

THE FACTORY FLOOR

JUAN and MARIA, on tv, enter and do a more stylized version of SOFIA and INDELECIO's tango. SOFIA crosses to the TV and sits. DONELLA hurries in to watch the soap opera with SOFIA. Suddenly MARIA, crying, breaks away from JUAN.

JUAN
Oh, Maria - why do you cry?

MARIA
I cry because... I have betrayed my family! When my mother finds out about our love, it will kill her!

JUAN
But why, why? Is it because your family is so rich, and I, I am so, so poor?

MARIA
¡Sí!

JUAN
Is it because my parents are peasants, and yours own the biggest recording company in Paraguay?

MARIA
¡Sí!

JUAN
And is it because, in my poverty, I have been... microwaved?

MARIA
Oh, hold me, Juan! Hold me like it is the End of the World!

JOE enters and turns off the TV. JUAN and MARIA exit.

JOE
Okay, okay, back to work!

DONELLA
That wasn't ten minutes!

JOE
It was eight minutes.

DONELLA
It was ten yesterday-

JOE
Yesterday this was Peaceweavers New Age Urban Hempwear. Today it's Peaceweavers New Age Urban Hempwear Collective! You don't want to see the Collective fail, do you?

SOFIA AND DONELLA

No...

JOE

Well, then - better jump to it!

DONELLA

It would be a shorter jump if you were still working...

JOE

Ya'll voted me supervisor, and I can't supervise if I'm ironin'.

DONELLA

I don't recall voting on shorter breaks!

Suddenly JOE puts up his hand, and in an authoritative voice says:

JOE

Collective meeting!

JOE, DONELLA, and SOFIA each grab a stool, and three sit in a meeting circle. JOE acts as Chairperson of the meeting.

JOE

People! Two options on the length of break have been proposed! Ten minutes (aside to SOFIA in a disdainful voice), which will guarantee that all our dreams are crushed and our lives destroyed, or (cheerfully) eight minutes! All in favor of (horrified) ten minutes?

DONELLA raises her hand.

Eight minutes?

JOE raises his hand.

Sofia?

SOFIA slowly raises her hand.

SOFIA

(to DONELLA) I'm sorry. Eight minutes...

JOE

Eight minutes passes! Happy? Now come on, we have to look efficient for the investors.

JOE, SOFIA, and DONELLA return their stools.

DONELLA

Thought we were worker owned, worker operated!

JOE

Operated. Technically the stockholders still own all of this.

DONELLA
This is supposed to be ours!

JOE
And if we can make this work, be efficient and business-like, it will be!

DONELLA
Why do we have stockholders anyway? What happened to, "we run it for us?"

JOE
That's the American way of doing business!

DONELLA
But we don't need them!

JOE
Yes, we do!

DONELLA
No, we don't!

JOE puts up his hand, and in an authoritative voice:

JOE
Collective meeting!

JOE, DONELLA, and SOFIA grab stools again, and sit in a circle again. JOE acts as Chairperson of the meeting, again.

People! All in favor of Peaceweavers having no investors, starting from scratch, no money, and dying a quick, painful death cuz "we don't need them?"

DONELLA raise her hand.
All in favor of stayin' alive?

JOE raises his hand.
Sofia?

SOFIA slowly raises her hand.

SOFIA
Oh...yes -

DONELLA
Oh, no...

SOFIA
I don't want to cause any trouble...

JOE
That's right!

JOE, SOFIA, and DONELLA return their stools.

JOE
The only reason they ain't had the cops kick us out yet is on account of bad publicity! Now the most important thing is to show them we ain't no threat. Then they'll leave us alone. Ya'll gotta trust me on this. Besides, this is the only way we're gonna get those bank loans -

SOFIA
Bank loans!

JOE
What?

DONELLA
You didn't say nothin' about loans from the bank!

JOE
So?

SOFIA
That is not how we did it in Argentina.

JOE
This ain't Argentina, this is America!

SOFIA
Argentina is also America, Joe.

DONELLA
Ya'll didn't take money from the bank?

SOFIA
Our Collaborative believed bank loans were a trap!

DONELLA
(to JOE)
See?

JOE
This ain't Argentina!

DONELLA puts up her hand, and in an authoritative voice:

DONELLA
Collective meeting!

JOE, DONELLA, and SOFIA grab stools again, and sit in a circle again. DONELLA acts as Chairperson of the meeting.

DONELLA
All those in favor of applying for a loan from the bloodsucking banks, who would gladly dance on our dead bodies for money?

JOE raises his hand.
All opposed?

DONELLA raises her hands.

Sofia?

SOFIA slowly raises her hand.

Motion is defeated!

JOE, SOFIA, and DONELLA return their stools.

JOE
(to SOFIA)

See, you just got mixed up because you were dating that guy, Independable -

SOFIA

Indelecio!

JOE

That commie got you thinking all wrong!

DONELLA

Well, I didn't date no commie, and it sounds funky to me, too!

JOE

Oh, so Donella, you gonna pay the electric bills for this place? Cuz they done froze the account! Which one of you got a rich uncle - cuz that's the only way we gonna have the money without the bank!

SOFIA

But -

JOE

Plus we gotta pay off the loans Ernesto already took out. We still owe them, too!

SOFIA

Those aren't ours. He should have to pay them back!

JOE

And we're gonna have bills from the suppliers. Bills for shipping, phone bills, insurance... Sofia, I guess you just gonna give back yo' paychecks to take care of all that!

SOFIA

I... I -

JOE

And you got that baby comin' soon... how you gonna take care of that without no money?

SOFIA

Oh...

Seeing his chance as SOFIA weakens, JOE puts up HIS hand, and in an authoritative voice:

JOE

Collective meeting!

JOE, DONELLA, and SOFIA grab stools again, and sit in a circle again. JOE acts as Chairperson of the meeting again.

JOE

People! All those in favor of reopening the previous question?

DONELLA

What?

JOE

All in favor?

JOE and SOFIA vote yes.

Opposed?

DONELLA raises her hand.

The question is reopened. All those in favor of rescinding the vote against applying to the bank for a loan?

JOE and SOFIA raise their hands.

Opposed?

DONELLA raises her hand.

Vote rescinded. All those in favor of applying for a loan from the bank?

JOE raises his hands.

SOFIA

But -

JOE

Debate is closed! It's time to vote....

DONELLA

Sofia -

SOFIA

I'm sorry, Donella!

SOFIA raises her hand.

JOE

Opposed?

DONELLA raises her hand.

Motion passes!

JOE, SOFIA, and DONELLA return their stools.

DONELLA

It ain't right...

JOE
We ain't tryin' to change the system, we're just tryin' to keep our jobs.

DONELLA
But why don't we try to change the system?

JOE
You can't! This is how business is done! You got banks, and you got stockholders... They got all the money and they always will. They own the ship, and you either on board or in the water.

DONELLA
But -

JOE
This here is America - ain't no other way! But we can feel good, 'bout what we done! We done something here! We stood together. We won!

Song: "REVOLUTION'S OVER".

JOE

OPEN UP YOUR EYES ,

TAKE A LOOK AROUND,

THE REVOLUTION'S OVER,

WE STOOD OUR GROUND!

WE'VE HAD OUR VICTORY,

OUR BATTLE'S DONE.

WE GOT THE FACTORY -

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT WE'VE WON?

BUT NOW YOU SAY IT'S NOT ENOUGH,

YOU SAY YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED?

YOU WANT TO SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD,

DON'T YOU THINK FOLKS HAVE TRIED?

YOU CAN SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE

TRYING TO MAKE THE SYSTEM FALL,

BUT YOU'RE BETTER OFF BANGING
YOUR HEAD AGAINST THE WALL!
THE PROBLEM'S TOO BIG,
THE PEOPLE TOO SMALL,
WE GOTTA HOLD ON TO WHAT WE GOT
OR WE'LL LOSE IT ALL.

WHEN I LOOKED AT LIFE
THROUGH A YOUNGER MAN'S EYES,
IT WAS EASY TO THINK
THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE.

BUT TIME HAS A WAY
OF MAKING YOU SEE
THIS WORLD WILL NEVER BE
WHAT WE WANT IT TO BE!

THE ONE'S WHO HAVE CONTROL
MAKE SURE THEY ALWAYS WILL
THEY'LL LIE, AND THEY'LL CHEAT YOU -
SOME EVEN KILL!
YOU CAN SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE
TRYING TO MAKE THE SYSTEM FALL.
BUT YOU'RE BETTER OFF BANGING
YOUR HEAD AGAINST THE WALL!
THE PROBLEM'S TOO BIG,
THE PEOPLE TOO SMALL,
WE GOTTA HOLD ON TO WHAT WE GOT

OR WE'LL LOSE -

LOSE IT ALL!

JOE
Now I got a meeting to get to, something that might solve all our problems. So get to work, and I'll be back soon!

JOE exits.

DONELLA
Sofia... how could you?

SOFIA
I can't go through that again.

DONELLA
Go through what?

SOFIA
Nothing. It is nothing. Besides, you heard Joe - we won.

DONELLA
Don't feel like we won. Not only do I gotta work, I gotta stay occupying the factory three nights a week and pay a babysitter! I'm making less than before!

SOFIA
Donella -

DONELLA
I need a cigarette - I'm taking my two other minutes!

DONELLA starts to exit, stops.

DONELLA
And I don't know what is goin' on with you, what you went through, but this ain't right, and you ain't right! Joe talkin' about how hard it is to go it alone... can't be harder than this here! And maybe that's just the price you gotta pay.

DONELLA exits.

SCENE 8

A FLASHBACK

THE FACTORY FLOOR OF THE MILL IN POSIBILIDAD

There is a blast of tear gas, forcing SOFIA back, coughing, from the door. SOFIA quickly removes her pregnant belly.

SOFIA
Indelecio!

There is a crash of sound - screams, sirens, shots - as tear gas rolls across the stage.

INDELECIO (OFFSTAGE)
Sofia! Sofia, where are you?

INDELECIO enters at a run.

INDELECIO (CONT'D)
There aren't enough of us to fight them off!

SOFIA
We've got to get out of here!

INDELECIO
No! We can't just leave! That is what they want, for us to give up without a fight!

SOFIA
There are too many of them!

INDELECIO
Tear gas... Bastardos!

SOFIA
We are surrounded! We have to save ourselves!

INDELECIO
Pueblo de Posibilidad -

SOFIA
Is lost! There is nothing we can do - listen to me! Please - we have to tell the compañeros to go home -

INDELECIO
Gustavo is at the south door... I will go to the east. If we can hold them off until dawn, we have a chance -

SOFIA
No!

CLAUDIA enters at a run, coughing for the gas.

CLAUDIA
Sofia, take a slingshot and go the north side -

SOFIA is surprised to see her mother.

SOFIA
¡Mamá! What are you doing here?

INDELECIO
If we can hold them off until sunrise, the rest of the barrio will see what's happening -

CLAUDIA
¡Sí! Go!

SOFIA
Mamá, you're supposed to be home! It's not your shift -

CLAUDIA
I traded with Eulalia. Her baby is coming soon.

SOFIA
Mamá, you have to -

cLAUDIA
Damn them! When we are fewest in number! How did they know? Someone must have -

Three menacing POLICÍA suddenly enter in full riot gear. CLAUDIA turns and fearlessly faces them.

CLAUDIA
Get out! This mill is ours!

SOFIA
Mamá, no!

A POLICÍA tries to grab CLAUDIA, who struggles against him. SOFIA tries to grab him, but she is pushed to the ground. Another POLICÍA grabs CLAUDIA from behind. The third slams his baton into CLAUDIA's stomach. CLAUDIA crumples to the ground as the first POLICÍA prepares to strike SOFIA, INDELECIO enters.

INDELECIO
Get your hands off them, you pigs!

INDELECIO pulls the POLICÍA off SOFIA. He knocks one to the ground with a punch, then hits another. A fourth POLICÍA enters behind him and hits INDELECIO in the back of the knees with his

club. INDELECIO staggers and falls to his knees. A fifth POLICÍA enters and the five of them stand over INDELECIO, beating him with their batons until it is clear he is dead. They stand, looking down at him, panting from the exertion.

SOFIA

Noooooo!

EL PATRÓN enters. He barks orders to the POLICÍA.

EL PATRÓN

What is going on? Don't just stand there! There are still workers in the -

CLAUDIA

¡Cabrón!

EL PATRÓN
(gloating)

Mamá Claudia...

El PATRÓN sees INDELECIO lying on the ground. He walks over and looks down at him.

The CAST Photo by John Kokosa

EL PATRÓN
Get this dead dog out of my mill.

Two of the POLICÍA drag INDELECIO'S body away. SOFIA tries to run after them, but is blocked by two of the remaining POLICÍA. They push her back toward EL PATRÓN, and one POLICÍA goes to hit SOFIA.

EL PATRÓN
Leave her!

Watching INDELECIO being dragged away SOFIA is overcome with grief.

SOFIA
No! No! No!

CLAUDIA
I will kill you!

EL PATRÓN
It's not my fault! He was a thief, and this is the price you pay for resisting arrest!

SOFIA
You promised!

EL PATRÓN
(points at CLAUDIA)
And there she is!

CLAUDIA
What... Sofia -

EL PATRÓN
See, I am a man of honor.

SOFIA
Indelecio...!

EL PATRÓN
Maybe you should have bargained for the life of your lover too.

The truth dawns on CLAUDIA.

CLAUDIA
Sofia, what have you... no...

SOFIA
Mamá -

EL PATRÓN
You were right, Sofia. Before dawn was the best time.

CLAUDIA
(crying)
Oh, no... no!

EL PATRÓN gestures at CLAUDIA

EL PATRÓN
(to POLICÍA)
Get this bitch out. She is trespassing.

Two POLICÍA half drag the distraught and injured CLAUDIA away.

SOFIA
¡Mamá! Wait, no!

EL PATRÓN
(to SOFIA)
And you... there is no place for rats in my mill.

El PATRÓN exits, followed by the last POLICÍA, leaving SOFIA wailing in misery.

SCENE 9

THE FACTORY FLOOR

SOFIA puts her pregnant belly back on, sits on a stool, stunned by her last memory. JOE enters without seeing SOFIA. Believing he's alone, JOE picks up the tv remote, sits in front of the tv, and hits the power button on th e remote.We hear the theme song of "Cazador de Amor."

Song: "MI CORAZON."

ALL

MI CORAZÓN ES UN CAZADOR DE AMOR

PERO ENCONTRARÁ LO QUE DESEA

ESTA VIDA ESTA LLENA DE PENA

PARA LOS QUE SON FIELES COMO NOSOTROS

MARIA (V.O.)
Oh, Juan!

JUAN (V.O.)
Oh, Maria!

JOE is entranced by the TV.

MARIA (V.O.)
Oh, Juan, what can one do about all the bad in the world, all the suffering?

JUAN (V.O.)
Mi amor, there is nothing we can do about all the suffering. All we can do is live... for our love!

JOE
You tell her, Juan...

MARIA (V.O.)
You are right - no one can change the world!

DONELLA enters.

JOE
That's what I'm talking about!

MARIA
It is the way things are. And nothing else matters, as long as we love each other!

JOE AND JUAN
Oh, Maria!

JOE AND MARIA

Oh, Juan!

DONELLA

Oh, no!

JOE snaps off the TV.

JOE

Um... Collective meeting! We got to vote on something.

DONELLA

Lemme guess - five minute breaks!

In an interaction reminiscent of those between ERNESTO and JOE, only now DONELLA is the rebel:

JOE

Donella -

DONELLA

Joseph -

JOE

I just came from a meeting that could solve all our problems! Take the pressure off us, so we don't have to worry on each, every detail about runnin' this place!

DONELLA

How?

JOE

And get us out of debt!

DONELLA

How?

JOE

And it would mean no more occupation!

DONELLA

How!

JOE

With our new benefactor!

JOE goes to the door, swings it open, and ushers in a stern but victorious MS. GACHS.

JOE

Ms. Gachs, from Jenkins Clothing International!

DONELLA

But... but...

GACHS

As a Board Member of Peaceweavers, I will be authorized by the Corporation to pay all your outstanding debts.

DONELLA

Board member? What the -

JOE

Now that's what we got to vote on! The only way to get this company back on track is if we have somebody to handle all the stuff we don't know.

DONELLA

And who's on this board?

JOE

Well, Ms. Gachs here knows finances, I know about all the machines -

DONELLA

Who else?

Suddenly,ERNESTO enters, flanked by MANNY in his security guard uniform. ERNESTO rings his bells. SOFIA and DONELLA are shocked.

ERNESTO

Hola, everyone!

DONELLA

What is he doing here?

ERNESTO

Joe and I meditated on this -

ERNESTO AND JOE

Ommmm -

DONELLA

Oh my goodness...

ERNESTO

And I decided to call off all that negative police energy.

DONELLA

We don't need you!

ERNESTO

We all need, Donella. I think it was Dr. Phil who said -

JOE

Ernest, you're not helping.

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins started Peaceweavers! And people out there need to see something they recognize.

DONELLA
I don't get it! Why would Jenkins Clothing -

GACHS
Peaceweavers was already a good investment in the progressive consumer market - think how much more lucrative when the Corporation can say it owns an actual collective!

DONELLA
Owns?

JOE
People don't want real change, Donella, real revolution. They just want security and low prices, and something that makes them feel better about themselves. They just want a little revolution. And that's what we'll be giving them at Peaceweavers -

JOE, ERNESTO, GACHS
New Age Urban Hempwear Collective!

GACHS
A wholly owned subsidiary of Jenkins Clothing International.

JOE
So all we gotta do is vote, and -

DONELLA shoots here hand up.

DONELLA
No! I vote no! This here place is ours, and I ain't voting to give it back! No!

JOE
Donella, don't nobody in America even know what a Collective is!

DONELLA
I said no.

JOE
Okay, okay... One vote against. All in favor?

JOE raises his hand.

Sofia?

SOFIA
I... I don't -

DONELLA
Come on, Sofia!

JOE
No pressure. Just remember, this ain't Argentina.

DONELLA
We all know this ain't Argentina!

JOE
Sofia?

DONELLA
Sofia?

SOFIA, in a daze, turns on the TV. We hear the theme song of "Cazador de Amor." SOFIA has seemingly retreated into her fantasy world. DONELLA looks at SOFIA in shocked disbelief.

DONELLA
So that's it? All that trouble, nights on this hard floor, away from my kids, and for what? So that nothing changes?

JOE
This is all we gonna get, Donella. You ain't thinking -

DONELLA
I'm done with your thinking! I'm... I'm done.

DONELLA takes of her apron.

JOE
Your shift isn't over!

DONELLA
I'm going home to see my kids!

DONELLA throws her apron at JOE, exits.

SOFIA
Donella -

JOE
We can't worry about her, she just don't understand. Just put up your hand, and we can get on with -

Suddenly MANNY puts his hand up.

MANNY
No!

ERNESTO
What are you doing?

MANNY

I vote no.

ERNESTO

You can't vote.

MANNY

I'm an employee too! I'm the security guru!

ERNESTO

You're my security guru!

MANNY

My paycheck says Peaceweavers, so I'm a worker here! And I vote no!

ERNESTO

You're fired!

GACHS

You can't fire him until after you're on the Board.

ERNESTO

Damn! I mean, darn! I mean... hola!

ERNESTO rings his bells again, but MANNY snatches them out of ERNESTO's hand.

MANNY

I'm tired of jumping every time you ring your bells!

MANNY throws the bells offstage.

JOE

Manny, this is the only way Peaceweavers can live.

MANNY

Well, like my tita says, "Better to die on your feet than live on your knees!"

SOFIA has another pain.

MANNY

Oh no! Is it time?

SOFIA

I don't know -

MANNY

I'll get a doctor!

SOFIA

Don't leave me!

JOE

Quick, Sofia, you gotta vote!

MANNY

Joe!

GACHS

If she votes yes, it will just be a tie.

JOE

Then we'll have to vote again. And, this time, Donella won't be here.

MANNY

That's not fair!

JOE

That's democracy!

SOFIA tries to pull herself together.

SOFIA

I will vote...

JOE

Good girl!

SOFIA

I vote -

Suddenly, music on the tv is interrupted!

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

¡Attención! We interrupt Cazador de Amor for breaking news - Posibilidad, Buenos Aires, Argentina -

Everyone looks at the tv.

SOFIA

What?

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

One year ago, workers took over the mill, and today the workers are back in control!

JOE

What's going on?

CLAUDIA enters to a different part of the stage, as if on the"television." The others do not look at her, but still look at the tv. CLAUDIA is speaking to a crowd.

SOFIA

¡Mamá!

CLAUDIA

Comrades! It has been eight months since Pueblo de Posibilidad was seized from the workers!

SOFIA has a pain.

CLAUDIA
Eight months since El Patrón and the Policía threw us out! And eight months since the death of our Indelecio! But in that time we have continued the fight! And today the people of Posibilidad have awarded us the mill!

JOE
Say what?

SOFIA
Shhh!

CLAUDIA
Because here, in Argentina, the people have the right to give a bankrupt business to whoever can make it work, and we showed we can run this mill better than all the patrones!

SOFIA
¡Che!

JOE
This ain't Argentina!

CLAUDIA
Today, right now, there are hundreds of industrial and farm cooperatives working to rebuild our country! And in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, there are hundreds more! This is how we will take back our labor, our lives, and our world! Together! Cooperatively, collectively! ¡Los Pueblos Los Pueblos Unidos!

CLAUDIA
¡Viva Pueblo de Posibilidad!

SOFIA
¡Viva!

CLAUDIA
¡Venceremos!

SOFIA AND MANNY
¡Venceremos!

ERNESTO
¡Venceremos!

JOE
(to ERNESTO)
You ain't helping!

ERNESTO
Sorry.

SOFIA
No!

JOE
What?

SOFIA
I vote no!

JOE
But -

SOFIA
There is no such thing as a little revolution, Joe. You either change it all or nothing changes!

GACHS
Then you will have no cloth to make your clothes! Jenkins Clothing will cut you off from all our suppliers!

JOE
See? And ain't no textile mill gonna sell none to no commie collective!

SOFIA
Really?

SOFIA looks at CLAUDIA on the tv.

SOFIA
I can think of one textile mill in Argentina that will be happy to get business from a factory collective in the United States!

GACHS
How will you pay for it?

JOE
With no bank loan?

SOFIA
We will borrow the cloth, and pay for it after we sell the clothes. The mill will cooperate with us, and we will not have to borrow from the bank!

SOFIA spits. After a moment, MANNY spits too.

ERNESTO
But you can't do this! You need me! I'm not just your boss, I'm your Ernesto, and you are my -

MANNY
If you call us compadres, I'm gonna punch you in the face!

ERNESTO
(his mellow badly harshed)
Ms. Gachs, I need new age instrumental music!

GACHS
Mr. Jenkins -

ERNESTO
NEW AGE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC!

ERNESTO and GACHS exit. JOE starts to follow them.

SOFIA
Joe... Don't go.

JOE
This ain't right. This here is America.

SOFIA
And it has to change.

JOE considers this revolution for a moment, then -

JOE
Well, I can't.

JOE exits. CLAUDIA, on tv, continues to speak.

CLAUDIA
Sofia -

SOFIA
¿Mamá?

CLAUDIA
Wherever you are, I hope you can hear me. I know why you did what you did, and why you thought you had to leave without telling me the truth. But I want you to know - I love you.

SOFIA
I love you too, Mamá!

CLAUDIA
And, when we meet again, I will hold you in my arms, and together we will celebrate our Posibilidad!

Reprise: "ESTA ES"

CLAUDIA

NOW IS OUR TIME -

LET OUR VOICES RING CLEAR

WITH A MESSAGE TO ALL!

SOFIA, CLAUDIA, MANNY

THIS IS THE CALL -

THE OLD WAYS ARE DYING

AND A NEW WORLD IS RISING AS THEY FALL!

The rest of the cast enters.

ALL

ESTA ES NUESTRA LUCHA,

ESTO ES NUESTRO TIEMPO -

THIS IS OUR STRUGGLE,

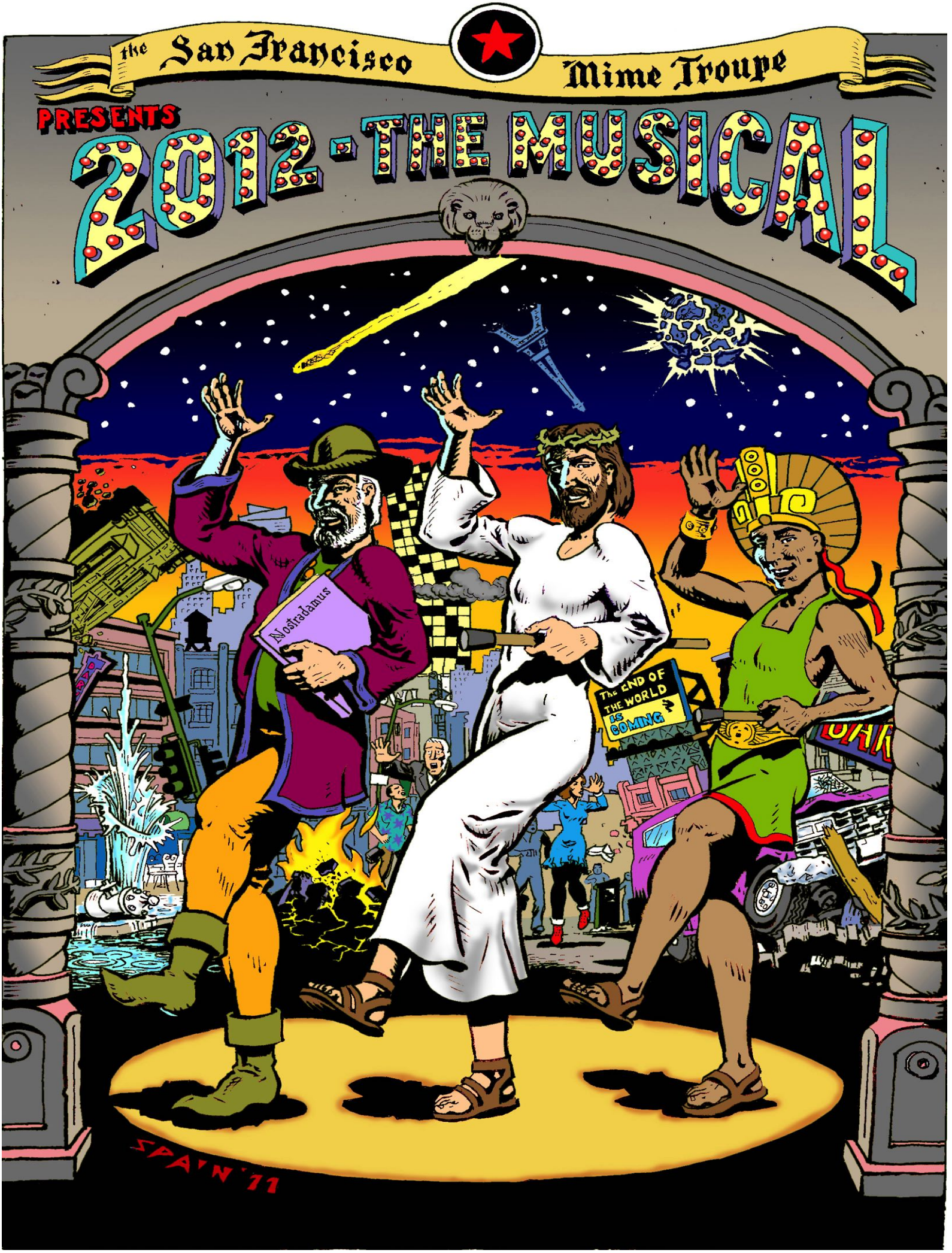
THIS IS OUR TIME!

End of show.

Michael Gene Sullivan, Rotimi Agbabiaka, Velina Brown, Maggie Mason, Brian Rivera
Photo by David Allen

2012: The Musical!

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan, Ellen Callas
Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran


the San Francisco Mime Troupe
PRESENTS
2012 - THE MUSICAL
Nostradamus
The END OF THE WORLD IS COMING
SPAIN '71

A political theatre company, dedicated to telling the stories of Capitalist oppression with revolutionary fervor, struggles to stay alive in a political and economic climate hostile to their message and very existence.

Sound familiar?

Fighting the Power has always been the mission of Theatre Bam!, but you can't fight if you are dead. And as government funding for the arts dries up, and individual donors are squeezed by the Recession, financial options are drying up.

But of course… there is always…

Corporate Sponsorship! (Insert evil laugh here.)

But…but…but…

Can you shout "Death to the Pigs!" when your own boardroom is a veritable sty?

With less and less public money committed to public art that is the question for artists around the country. And as a result, as theaters shift to social issues, who will produce the plays that demand economic justice? The Revolution will not be televised, but does corporate funding of the arts mean it won't be on stage as well? In the past plays have inspired riots and revolutionary movements. But now, in America, with corporations holding the pursestrings and the curtain ropes, what can the artists do?

The Mime Troupe is warning us that corporations are mind-numbingly insidious and all-powerful. "How many of you work in a corporation?" one of the characters slyly taunted the opening-day audience at Dolores Park on the Fourth of July. But the show's upbeat message is that it's not too late for "power to the people" — as long as we don't allow ourselves to get co-opted by corrupt politicians, rampant materialism or false prophets, and don't submit to despair. In other words, keep on truckin'. As the Mime Troupe has been proclaiming for a half-century — "You just can't let the bastards win."
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Elaine
Suze
Leon
Al
Rand
Haverlock
Senator Phaeus
President Obama
Bankster 1
Bankster 2
Lucrum
Daniels
Dr. Sinterra
Red Alien
Mayan Priest
Taco Truck Drive
Waiter

2012 - THE MUSICAL! opened on July 4th, 2011, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Wilma Bonet with the following cast:

Elaine, Lucrum, Dr. Sinterra…….Lizzie Calogero*
Suze, Bankster 1……Shiobhan Doherty*
Leon……Cory Censoprano
President Obama, Al, Senator Phaeus,
Taco Truck Driver……..…Michael Gene Sullivan*
Rand, Daniels, Red Alien, Mayan Priest……..Victor Toman*
Haverlock, Bankster 2, Waiter……..Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

PROLOGUE

A STAGE

Hail to the Chief is played. The curtain rises and an actor in a red, white, and blue mask and wearing a suit appears, representing PRESIDENT OBAMA is seen center stage. Voice offstage are heard shouting for the PRESIDENT. The PRESIDENT rushes in, shuts the door behind him.

(The Prologue is iambic pentameter, and is performed in a broad Shakespearian style. The masks of the villains are Commedia dell'arte style)

VOICES
Mr. President! Mr. President!

PRESIDENT
Enough, enough! No more today will I
To all these voices clattering attend!
Three years ago when first I did arrive
All cheered and shouted that i was their man.
They thought they'd changed the nation with their votes
They wondered - can we do it? Yes we can!
But now the clouds have lower'd on this White House
The Bailouts, torture, oil, Afghanistan,
No public option, tax breaks for the rich
They say i'm just a black republican!

Am I the first to warrant such defection
Because I promised lies to win election?

There is a buzz from the intercom.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Yes?

INTERCOM
Mr. President, you 2:00 is here.

Two LOBBYISTS, BANKSTER 1 and BANKSTER 2, enter. They are broad, masked characters in garish suits.

BANKSTER 1
How is't with thee, Barack?

BANKSTER 2
Art thou not well?

Michael Gene Sullivan as PRESIDENT Photo by Fletcher Oakes

PRESIDENT
My lords of Goldman, Sachs, why comest thou here?
Have not I done thy bidding well enough,
Must thou besiege me in this oval room?

BANKSTER 1
My president, there is still much to do,
Some regulations thou has't yet to strike

BANKSTER 2
Restrictions on our bank, our trades, our wealth!
Deregulate thou must, or face our wrath!

PRESIDENT
My lords, I cannot! ruin me it would!

BANKSTER
And would'st thou rather wall street brought thee down?
We can and will -

The intercom buzzes.

PRESIDENT
Hark! What is that new sound?

INTERCOM
Mr. Lucrum, from the Chamber of Commerce.

Another LOBBYIST, LUCRUM, enters. He is also in a mask, with an even broader, villainous style.

LUCRUM
You gotta break dese unions for me, boy!

PRESIDENT
I'm working on it!

LUCRUM
Well, not fast enough!
Transit workers, teachers, nurses, cops -
And all the jobs to China I can't move!

The intercom buzzes.

INTERCOM
Mr. President, your 2:05 is here. Governor Daniels.

Another LOBBYIST, GOVERNOR DANIELS, enters, also with a mask, the air of an lordly religious fanatic.

DANIELS
Good gentles, pardon, I must interrupt
And tell the President that I refuse
All healthcare funds that my constituents
Might in any way get ben'fit from!

PRESIDENT
WHAT?

DANIELS
I cannot take them!

PRESIDENT
WHY?

DANIELS
(said as four syllables)
A - BOR - TI - ONS!

PRESIDENT
The money for the sick?

DANIELS
A - BOR - TI - ONS!

PRESIDENT
The Poor?

DANIELS
Abortions!

PRESIDENT
Kids?

DANIELS
A - bor - ti - ons!

BANKSTERS
Regulations!

LUCRUM
Jobs!

DANIELS
A - bor - ti - ons!

BANKSTERS
Too big to fail!

LUCRUM
Unions!

DANIELS

A - bor - ti - ons!

PRESIDENT
(as if tempest tossed)
Rage! Blow!

The intercom buzzes.

INTERCOM
Mr. President, your 2:10 is here - Mr. Hill, from Local 217.

A worker in a hard hat, MR. HILL, enters. HILL is not masked, and has a humble yet heroic air.

LUCRUM
A union man?

BANKSTER 1
Here?

BANKSTER 2
Now?

DANIELS
A - bor - ti - ons?

PRESIDENT
Good Gentlemen, please -

LEON (AS HILL)
Mr. President!
I come to talk to you about the plight
Of workers! Those who built this mighty land,
We till and toil in factory and field
Without us nothing moves, is made, or taught,
Our brains and muscles are America!
WE are the vast majority, but still
We're first forgotten when the times get tough.
We are in debt! But who gets bailed out? Banks!
We want to work, but jobs to China go,
Our healthcare by fanatics is destroyed
Our country's broken, but there's cash for war!

PRESIDENT
I promise, Hill, I'm doing all I can -

BANKSTERS, LUCRUM, and DANIELS turn on PRESIDENT.

BANKSTER 1
Thou dare'st to promise anything to him?

BANKSTER 2
We are the ones that put thee where thou are't!

LUCRUM
We'll crush thee if just once thou showest guts!

BANKSTER 1
If thou defy'st us –

DANIELS
We'll recast thee
As all the things Americans despise!

LUCRUM
Scandals, crimes,

DANIELS
Affairs,

BANKSTERS
Kickbacks and bribes,

BANKSTERS, LUCRUM, DANIELS
Thou commie, muslim, Hitler, terrorist!

BANKSTER
Our media will broadcast each distortion
He'll wish that he were -

DANIELS
An a-bor-ti-on!

PRESIDENT collapses into his seat, defeated.

PRESIDENT
O, Would that someone from this cruel torment
Could rescue this Obama president!

With the PRESIDENT defeated the LOBBYISTS close in to destroy HILL. But suddenly HILL snatches off his work shirt, revealing a superhero style, spandex top with a large "WM" on the chest. The LOBBYISTS fall back in fearful recognition.

LUCRUM
Oh, no! It's -

LOBBYISTS AND PRESIDENT
WorkingClassMan!

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
Get thee behind me, Mr. President!

WORKINGCLASSMAN steps between the LOBBYISTS and the PRESIDENT, fending off their attacks. After an amazing fight, the PRESIDENT is saved, and WORKINGCLASSMAN wins! The LOBBYISTS cower in defeat, with WORKINGCLASSMAN standing over them.

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN) (CONT'D)
You see, Barack? Don't fear them, just attack
Face them, and they can't stab you in the -

Meanwhile, behind WORKINGCLASSMAN the PRESIDENT has pulled out a large knife. With an anguished yell the PRESIDENT plunges the knife into WORKINGCLASSMAN's back. WORKINGCLASSMAN falls, looking in disbelief at the PRESIDENT, who the LOBBYISTS crowd around, congratulating.

LUCRUM
(relieved)
Congratulations, boy, thou save'st the day!

LUCRUM
What weapon did'st thou use to bring him low?

PRESIDENT hands DANIELS the knife.:

DANIELS
(reading the handle)
"Bipartisenship-izer." What's it do?

PRESIDENT
(sadly)
Weakens your base, and liquefies your spine...

WORKINGCLASSMAN, not quite dead, pulls himself up to his knees.

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
Barack, I thought that you were on my side,
I would have fought for you unto my death!

PRESIDENT
I never said I'd give my life for you!
My presidency forfeit in your stead.
Remember what I said in speeches, too -
"There is no blue America, nor a red."

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
The power in this country comes from green!
That is the color greases this machine!

PRESIDENT
That Wall Street owns me is, forsooth, most true.
I'm sorry, Workingclassman! So, adieu.

WORKINGCLASSMAN, dying, turns to audience.

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
Is workingclassman done? Is this my end?
Then from each tower, and from every steeple
You, good friends, must all our rights defend!
So shout it now, say "Power to the -

WORKINGCLASSMAN falls as if dead. Hopefully at this point someone in the crowd will pick up the rhyme, and say "People!" which kinda revives WORKINGCLASSMAN a bit.

BANKSTER
But what is this? Their chanting him revives!

LUCRUM
The power of the people gives him life!

Shouting mounts, and WORKINGCLASSMAN comes back to life!

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
And Death to the pigs!

DANIELS
Stop him!

The LOBBYISTS fight against WORKINGCLASSMAN again, but this time he is victorious and kicks them out of the office.

LUCRUM
(to PRESIDENT)
Thou win'st this time! But keep in mind Barack -
Thy government is ours! We want it back!

LOBBYISTS exit..

PRESIDENT
Workingclassman! Can you please forgive
A president who's learned his lesson true?

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
(not pentameter)
Hell no! You stabbed me in the damn back!
(pentameter)
Why should I trust a president who's shown
That he's a willing partner of the rich,
But when it comes to standing by the poor
You let those bastards run us in a ditch!

PRESIDENT
And if I promise that i will repent?

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
Do something - anything! Then maybe I'll
Believe you're more than just another stooge.
Earn my trust with actions not with words,
Or get out of the way, and clear the field
For a progressive candidate who knows
Which side he's on, and how to win! Now go!

PRESIDENT, chastened, leaves

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
(to audience)
We, the people, must take back this house.
This fight's not over just cuz they retreat.
And to divide us they will always try
but the people, united, they cannot defeat!

CURTAIN DOWN

END OF PROLOGUE

Lizzie Calogero as ELAINE Photo by Fletcher Oakes

SCENE ONE

A STAGE

The curtain rises again, and the CAST comes downstage. The CAST take off their masks, bow, exit, as ELAINE, a feisty woman half in in street clothes half still in costume, steps forward.

ELAINE
(to audience)
Comrades, thank you for coming to the opening night of Theater BAM's production: "The Revolution will not be downloaded!" We hope you enjoyed it, and you'll tell all your friends. Now, we know there have been rumors that Theater BAM is going under. Don't you believe it! Exposing the crimes of our crypto-fascistic would-be Capitalist overlords may be a tough sell to funders, but we're not giving up! And you can help us by getting everyone you know down to the theater! Let's show the Bosses that a people's theater can survive! Good night, please put some money in those donation envelopes, and Power to the People!

ELAINE exit, and the curtains close. We are now backstage. ELAINE enters through the curtain as if from on stage, AL, middle-aged, and LEON, 20-something, enter. AL is a bit of an Eeyore, always seeing the negatives, and LEON is all positive revolutionary passion.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
Where's Suze?

AL
Not back from meeting with the funders.

ELAINE
We are not beaten, see?

AL
Yes, we are.

ELAINE
We'll get out of this!

AL
No, we won't.

LEON
Come on, Al - haven't you ever been down before?

AL
Yep.

LEON
When times looked tough?

AL

Yep.

LEON

And did you give up?

AL

Yep.

ELAINE

You're not helping!

AL

I'm being realistic. Comrades, we are blowing up a dead horse's ass.

ELAINE

Huh?

AL

My Pop used to say when people did something pointless, they were blowing up a dead horse's ass.

LEON

With dynamite?

AL

With air! Like artificial respiration!

LEON

Then shouldn't you blow in its mouth?

AL

It's dead! BAM is a dead horse, and I'm tired of blowing up its ass!

LEON

Al, you can't let the Man get you down!

AL

The Man? What is this, 1972?

ELAINE

Look, I know we haven't been paid in a while, that everyone had to get day jobs -

AL

Three -

ELAINE

But this isn't about money, it's about meaning!

AL

You can't pay the rent with meaning!

ELAINE

We'll get the money!

AL

No, we won't.

ELAINE

Yes we will! Theater BAM means something to people. And I promise you as long as the people needs we will be right here.

The landlord, Mr. RALSTON, enters.

RALSTON

You gotta get out.

ELAINE

What?

RALSTON

Three months I been floating you, Elaine. I got bills too, ya know. I don't like doing this, but I got a mortgage that's killing me!

ELAINE

But it's opening night!

RALSTON

And I got a developer interested in demolishing the theater.

AL

You mean blow it up?

LEON

Like a dead horse's ass?

RALSTON

Wants to put in a parking lot...

ELAINE

But Mr. Ralston -

RALSTON

Elaine -

SUZE, ELAINE's sister, enters. SUZE (pronounced "Susie") is younger and more stylishly dressed than her sister.

ALL

Suze!

ELAINE

(relieved)

Just in time!

LEON sees SUZE, and swoons a bit. He clearly has a heavy crush on her.

LEON
You look very nice.

SUZE
(dismissively)
Not now, Leon.

LEON
Okay.

ELAINE
Mr. Ralston, Suze's been meeting with our biggest funder -

SUZE
Yes -

ELAINE
This foundation, they love us!

SUZE
Yes -

ELAINE
And Suze works downtown, so she knows how to talk the talk -

SUZE
Yes -

ELAINE
And the good news is -

SUZE
No.

ELAINE
What?

SUZE
They said no.

ELAINE
Why?

SUZE
The Foundation is bankrupt.

ELAINE
Stock Market?

SUZE
Their accountant advised them before the crash to invest all their money somewhere offshore.

ELAINE
That's good! So, where's the money?

SUZE
Somewhere offshore... with the accountant.

RALSTON
You got 'till tomorrow, Elaine.

ELAINE
Mr. Ralston, don't you wanna be the guy that saves the show?

RALSTON
Well...

ELAINE
But the show must go on!

RALSTON
Not in this theater, sorry.

RALSTON leaves.

LEON
Well... we could always do shows in the parks!

AL
Oh, yeah - like there's money in that!

ELAINE
Suze, you gotta talk to some other foundations, donors -

AL
The country's in a Depression, Elaine! People are worried about paying rent, paying for food -

SUZE
(to ELAINE)
You'd know that if you weren't always in rehearsal.

ELAINE
And maybe you'd find more money if you weren't so busy...

SUZE
Weren't so busy what?

ELAINE
Nothing...

SUZE
So busy what?

ELAINE
You want me to say it?

AL puts up his hand, as if voting.

AL
I don't want you to say it!

SUZE
So, busy, what?

AL
(looking for support)
Leon!

LEON puts up his hand, too.

LEON
I don't want you to say it, either!

ELAINE
(to SUZE)
You want me to say it?

AL
Two of us over here don't want you to say it!

SUZE
So... busy... what?

AL & LEON
Don't say it!

ELAINE
Weren't so busy working for that capitalist pig!

AL
And, we're off!

SUZE
My paycheck from that capitalist pig is why I can afford to volunteer here!

ELAINE
A paycheck from the biggest criminal downtown!

SUZE
At least I have marketable skills!

ELAINE
And I don't?

SUZE
Not from where I'm sitting!

LEON
Hey -

ELAINE
Arthur Rand! You might as well work for the mob!

LEON
Hey -

ELAINE
Or worse... for Monsanto!

AL
Oh, that's low!

ELAINE walks away.

LEON
She doesn't mean it. She's upset. We're all upset.

SUZE
I know.

LEON
Are you upset?

SUZE
A little.

LEON
Would you like me to hold you?

SUZE
Leon, I've told you before, it's not going to happen between us.

LEON
Because I'm an actor?

SUZE
Because I'm a lesbian.

LEON
Too lesbian for a hug?

SUZE goes to here sister, trying to make up.

SUZE
Elaine, I'm sorry. We tried... you tried, but it's over. Did yer best, but now you need to think about getting a real job.

ELAINE
I have a real job! This is my job! While you're safe in your office making money we're on stage telling people stuff they need to know but don't want to hear! We're not trying to make money off them, we're trying to change them, to show them what kind of world we could have!

A middle-aged woman, MRS. HAVERLOCK enters. She is dressed in the tasteful extravagance of an old-money theatre patron.

HAVERLOCK
Bravo, bravo! That was thrilling! So passionate, so real!

ELAINE
(to HAVERLOCK)
Come back tomorrow, see our finale.

HAVERLOCK
That's what I want to talk to you about! My name is Haverlock. I represent Green Planet incorporated -

LEON
(a simmer)
Incorporated?

HAVERLOCK
We are always looking for arts organizations -

LEON
(a low boil)
Incorporated?

HAVERLOCK
Organizations that we can help financially -

LEON
(a full boil)
INCORPORATED!?!

HAVERLOCK
Is this part of the show?

LEON
(an explosion)
CORPORATE MONEY!! Well we are not interested in your filthy blood money, squeezed from the souls of honest workers by power hungry capitalist pigs! Ya know what we say? Power to the People, and Death to the Pigs!

HAVERLOCK applauds.

HAVERLOCK
(delighted)
Oh, it's wonderful! Death to the Pigs from me, too! Of course, as a vegan, when I say "Death to the Pigs" I'm speaking metaphorically.

LEON
Vegan?

HAVERLOCK
Oh, yes! We're all vegans at Green Planet! Vegan, gluten-intolerant, environmentalist revolutionary venture capitalists!

LEON
Ah ha! Capitalists!

HAVERLOCK
- who use capital to nurture small holistic companies! We at Green Planet are dedicated to creating a sustainable, meat-free, dairy-free, wheat-free, pollution-free world!

AL
That's a lot of free.

HAVERLOCK
And we are always looking for ways to get our message to people - people like the audience of Theater BAM!!

ELAINE
What are you talking about?

HAVERLOCK
Funding! I'm sure I could convince my partners at Green Planet to underwrite your next show.

LEON
I knew it! Corporate sponsorship!

HAVERLOCK
Green corporate sponsorship. We would pay all the expenses -

LEON
And how much would you pay us... FOR OUR SOULS?

SUZE
Shut up, Leon!

LEON
I'm sorry, honey.

SUZE
I'm not your honey!

ELAINE
Ms. Haverlock, we appreciate your offer, but I'm afraid -

SUZE
Can I talk to you for a moment?

SUZE pulls ELAINE aside

SUZE (CONT'D)
(to ELAINE)
What are you about to do?

ELAINE
It's against what we stand for.

SUZE
Right now you stand for going out of business!

AL
Elaine, maybe we should at least think about this...

ELAINE
We don't take corporate money!

SUZE
It's all corporate money! Who do you think your audience works for? They can't all be urban gardeners living off the grid bicycling to the farmer's market to sell ugly-ass tomatoes to anemic hippies!

AL
(to HAVERLOCK)
Hey, how much money are we talkin' here?

HAVERLOCK
$50,000 -

AL
$50,000!

SUZE
Come on, Elaine, just this one time...

LEON
(angrily)
Just one time, your name on a check, and the next thing you know you're in a suit, slaving in an office, yes sir, no sir, just another prostitute for capitalism!

SUZE
You calling me a prostitute?

LEON
No! Not you! I was talking to -

Thinking quickly LEON points at AL.

LEON
AL!

AL
What?

LEON

He's the prostitute. Over there. Prostitute! (to SUZE) You, well you're... you're... I love you!

SUZE

I'm a lesbian.

ELAINE

Ms. Haverlock - Thank you.

SUZE

(vindicated)

Yes!

ELAINE

But we can't accept.

Siobhan Doherty as SUZE, Michael Gene Sullivan as AL, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as HAVERLOCK, Lizzie Calogero as ELAINE, Cory Censoprano as LEON
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

LEON
(vindicated)
Yes!

ELAINE
I appreciate the offer, but it just isn't us. We can't accept money from the system we're trying to overthrow.

AL
Sure we can!

LEON
Prostitute!

HAVERLOCK
Well, I understand, and I admire your commitment to your ideals. I'm very sorry we couldn't make it work. Goodnight.

HAVERLOCK leaves.

AL
That's it?

ELAINE
No corporate money.

SUZE
When corporations are the only ones with money that's where you go to get it! They're the only one's hiring!

ELAINE
Well, they can't hire me!

LEON
That's right! Death to the pigs!

AL
I'm sorry I ever wrote that line for you.

ELAINE
Come on, we have to reset for tomorrow.

SUZE
Closing night -

ELAINE
Yeah...

ELAINE and LEON exit.

AL
She is so stubborn.

SUZE
She's always been like that.

AL
You two are so different. I can't believe you're sisters.

SUZE
Older sister Elaine - always so pure, so correct, never compromising - not like little sister Suze! I'm always wrong!

AL
She's been right about a lot of stuff.

SUZE
She doesn't understand that sometimes you gotta get that grant, get that corporate sponsor, get that money! It's not about revolution, it's about reality.

AL
But can we take cooperate dough without being corrupted?

Song: "DIRTY MONEY"

SUZE

ANY DOLLAR BILL

IS JUST THE SAME AS ANY OTHER,

IT COULD COME FROM SOME CROOK

OR YOUR DEAR OLD GRANDMOTHER.

ALL THE WORLD'S CASH

HAS BEEN DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD,

SLATHERED IN SWEAT,

SPLATTERED IN BLOOD.

THIS GOES FOR ANY PASO,

EURO, RUBLE, OR YEN –

YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT KNOWING

WHERE YOUR MONEY'S REALLY BEEN!

SUZE
IT'S ALL DIRTY MONEY,

IT'S ALL FILTHY MONEY!

AL

ANY KIND OF MONEY,

IT’S ALL FILTHY MONEY!

SUZE

ANY KIND OF MONEY

IS DIRTY DIRTY MONEY –

SUZE AND AL

IF YOU DON'T TAKE DIRTY MONEY

THEN YOU WON'T HAVE ANY MONEY AT ALL!

AL

BIG CORPORATIONS

CONTROL ALL THE DOUGH,

IF WE WANT TO STAY AFLOAT

THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE TO GO –

MOST PEOPLE WITH A JOB

ARE WORKING FOR THE MAN.

THEY GOTTA GET BY

AND IT'S THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN!

SUZE

WHAT GOOD ARE IDEALS

IF THEY DON'T HELP YOU SURVIVE

YOU CAN'T FIGHT THE POWER

IF YOU CAN'T STAY ALIVE

SUZE
IT'S ALL DIRTY MONEY,

IT'S ALL FILTHY MONEY!

AL
ANY KIND OF MONEY,

IS FILTHY, FILTHY MONEY!

SUZE AND AL

IF YOU DON'T TAKE DIRTY MONEY

THEN YOU WON'T HAVE ANY MONEY AT ALL!

AL
That why you quit directing plays for us, not enough money?

SUZE
I quit because I was tired of old clothes, old pizza, and old, stinky roommates.

AL
What about the politics?

SUZE
This isn't about politics for Elaine, it's just the way she is! When we were kids our dad worked for General Electric, and Elaine wouldn't take allowance from him because it was accepting payoff from the "War mongering capitalist pigs!"

AL
That's hardcore.

SUZE
That's Elaine - the perfect revolutionary! And she is going to revolution Theater BAM into the dump!

An alarm on SUZE's cellphone goes off.

SUZE
Oh, damn it, I gotta get downtown! Later, Al!

AL and SUZE exit separately.

SCENE TWO

IN THE OFFICE OF RAND ENTERPRISES, INTERNATIONAL.

Mr. RAND, the sharply dressed, high-energy CEO, enters his stylish, well-appointed office. He hits button on intercom.

RAND
Has Suze arrived yet?

INTERCOM
Not yet, Mr. Rand.

RAND
Where's the Senator?

INTERCOM
Getting out of his limo downstairs.

RAND
Blast! James! James, get in here!

BOB, an mild intern, enters.

RAND (CONT'D)
Why didn't you come in when I called?

BOB
Because my name's Bob.

RAND
Where's Suze?

BOB
I don't know, Mr. Rand.

RAND
What am I paying you for?

BOB
You're not paying me. I'm an intern.

RAND
Where is she?

BOB
Maybe she called in sick.

RAND
Sick? Lemme tell you something, Jim -

BOB
Bob -

RAND
You can't get ahead calling in sick!

BOB
No, sir!

RAND
Sacrifice! That's the secret!

BOB
Yes, sir!

RAND
You think I ever called in sick?

BOB
No sir!

RAND
Are you crazy? Of course I did! Sacrifice is for other people. The chumps, losers, and workers!

BOB
I'm an intern.

RAND
Think for yourself, Phil -

BOB
Bob -

RAND
Be your own person. You think I had this company given to me?

BOB
(trying to not be wrong again)
No?

RAND
I had to inherit it with my own two hands!

INTERCOM
Mr. Rand, Senator Phaeus is here to see you.

RAND
Send him in! And one last thing, Tim -

BOB
Bob -

RAND
Tom -

BOB

Bob -

RAND

Frank -

BOB

Bob -

RAND

John -

BOB

Bob -

RAND

Coffee! Now! And find Suze!

BOB goes to exit, is intercepted by SENATOR PHAEUS, who takes his hand. PHAEUS is very much the smiling, glad-handing, dim-bulb politician.

PHAEUS

(cheerfully)

Well, hello there!

BOB

Senator...

PHAEUS

Call me Skip! Always good to see a new young executive. Any friend of Arthur's is a friend of mine!

BOB

I'm an intern.

Realizing BOB is a nobody SENATOR abruptly drops BOB'S hand. BOB exits.

PHAEUS

Arthur!

RAND

Skip! How's my favorite first term senator?

PHAEUS

I don't know, Arthur...

RAND

Don't know what?

PHAEUS

This whole gig, being a ... um...

RAND
Senator -

PHAEUS
You didn't tell me there was so much... reading!

RAND
That's what your staff is for.

PHAEUS
I thought they were for sex.

RAND
And for reading reports, summarizing -

PHAEUS
Can they listen for me, too? 'Cuz listening to these old guys go on and on about my honorable this, and my most distinguished that, sitting in that dark room-

RAND
The price you pay for power.

PHAEUS
I'm losing my tan!

RAND
Skip -

PHAEUS
What?

RAND
Skip -

PHAEUS
What?

RAND
Sit! Skip, the reason I asked you up here is to find out how our little bill is doing.

PHAEUS
Who?

RAND
What.

PHAEUS
What?

RAND
The Bill!

PHAEUS
Who?

RAND
The Bill you introduced to exclude investment banks from the Dodd - Frank Act - the bill that would get government of our backs, the bill that let us do our job!

PHAEUS
Oh, that bill.

RAND
Well?

PHAEUS
It died. (flinching) Don't hit me!

RAND tries to suppress his rage so as not to frighten PHAEUS

RAND
Just tell me what happened...

PHAEUS
(carefully)
Well, all those other guys, the, um -

RAND
Senators -

PHAEUS
Said there was no sympathy for investment bankers.

RAND
I don't want sympathy!

PHAEUS
That people don't want to help you.

RAND
I don't want help!

PHAEUS
And that people hate you.

RAND
I don't want... what?

PHAEUS
And one of those, um -

RAND
Senators -

PHAEUS
Said the President would veto it anyway.

RAND
(exploding)
The President?!

PHAEUS
Don't hit me!

RAND
Why would the President veto my bill?

PHAEUS
I guess he needs their votes.

RAND
Who's votes?

PHAEUS
You know, them, the, uh -

RAND
Senators?

PHAEUS
No, not them, the other ones, smaller, the um...

RAND
Congressmen?

PHAEUS
Smaller -

RAND
Congresswomen?

PHAEUS
No, smaller, tiny, like ants...

RAND
The people?

PHAEUS
Bingo!

RAND
I can't believe we still let them have a say in how we run our country! They shouldn't be regulating us, they should be down on their hands and knees thanking us!

SUZE enters with a stack of folders.

RAND (CONT'D)
Suzi!

SUZE
Mr. Rand I have the reports.

SENATOR gives SUZE a lusty gaze.

PHAEUS
Arthur... aren't you going to...

RAND
Senator Phaeus, this is my assistant, Suze Marlowe -

SUZE
Senator.

PHAEUS
(flirty)
Call me Skip.

RAND
Suze's smart as a whip, hard as nails, and hot as hell. Too bad she bats for the other team.

PHAEUS
The Dodgers?

RAND
Come on, Skip, I'll see you out. Suze, stay here. I want to talk to you.

RAND and SENATOR leave. After a moment LEON enters, in Starbuck uniform.

LEON
Coffee delivery! One Grande Breve Half Cafe Cap with a gentle dusting of dark chocolate!

SUZE
Leon!

LEON
Suze!

SUZE
Oh my god!

LEON is humiliated being caught in his secret corporate day job.

LEON
(tortured)
I know!

SUZE
You work for -

LEON
(still tortured)
I'm a whore!

SUZE
All this time you gave me grief -

LEON
(about self, extremely tortured)
Whore!

SUZE
It's not that big a deal, you gotta pay the bills -

LEON
But how will I pay the bill on... MY SOUL? Oh, Suze! Why can't we get away from all this? This corporate cage... this capitalist trap! Why can't we just break away, quit this rat race, start a little commune up in the hills, just you and me... maybe some kids... a goat...

SUZE
There is no chance for advancement in a commune, Leon! It's a dead end! Like political theater. Besides, I like it here! I like the suits and the cars and the gym membership and the corner office with a view of Banana Republic! You, me and a goat! Please!

LEON crosses to SUZE to give her a hug. She stops him.

SUZE (CONT'D)
Lesbian.

RAND enters.

RAND
Coffee!

RAND takes coffee, downs it, hands the empty cup back.

RAND (CONT'D)
Beat it!

LEON exits.

RAND (CONT'D)
Okay Suze, guess what happened!

SUZE
The Bill didn't go through!

RAND looks with appreciation at his assistant

RAND
Suze, you got that special somethin', you always know what's on my mind...

SUZE
(reading his mind)

Regulations -

Song: "CHAINS OF REGULATION"

RAND

SANDBAGGED BY ASSHOLES

WHO OUGHT TO BE SHOT,

THOSE BASTARDS YOU BUY

WHO DON'T STAY BOUGHT!

THOSE LEECHES AND LOSERS

WANT TO TAKE WHAT I'VE GOT,

JUST BECAUSE I'VE

GOT A LOT!

OH, THE BURDEN OF TAXATION,

THE SHACKLES OF LEGISLATION,

AND THOSE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

OH, THE CHAINS OF REGULATION!

SUZE

Come on sir! I can't believe you're gonna let them get you down.

RAND

Get me down? Never!

(sings)

I'M A DOER!

I'M A MAKER!

I'M A THINKER!

I'M A TAKER!

I'M GOLDEN,

I'M A ONE!

I'M THE MAN,

I'M TOP GUN!

I'M THE MERO MERO,

I'M THE ICING ON TOP,

I'M KING OF THE HILL,

I'M THE CREAM OF THE CROP!

BUT THE CHAINS OF REGULATIONS –

RAND *(cont'd)*

That's it!

SUZE

What?

RAND

Come on, Suze - what am I thinking?

SUZE

(reading his mind again)

Break those chains!

RAND

How?

SUZE

You need -

RAND

My own personal President! Someone who looks good, speaks well and has some vague ideas...

SUZE

Like hope and change?

RAND

More like fear and loathing. My own fear inspiring candidate -

SUZE

Who'll say whatever you want him to!

RAND

I love it!

I'M A DOER!

I'M A MAKER!

I'M A THINKER!

I'M A TAKE!

I'M GOLDEN,

I'M A ONE,

I'M THE MAN,

I'M TOP GUN!

I'M THE MERO MERO,

I'M THE ICING ON TOP,

I'M KING OF THE HILL,

I'M THE CREAM OF THE CROP!

I'M THE MVP,

I'M THE HOME RUN HITTER,

I'M THE BEES KNEES,

I'M THE PICK OF THE LITTER!

I'M TOP DOG,

I'M THE PRIZE WINNER,

I'M THE WHOLE HOG,

I'M A PRIME RIB DINNER!

NO MORE BURDEN OF TAXATION,

BREAK THOSE CHAINS OF REGULATION!

RAND (CONT'D)
Come on, we've got work to do.

RAND and SUZE exit.

SCENE THREE

ON STAGE

Same as the end of Prologue . The PRESIDENT and WORKINGCLASSMAN are finishing their scene..

PRESIDENT
And if i promise that I will repent?

LEON (AS WORKINGCLASSMAN)
Do something - anything! Then maybe i'll
Believe you're more than just another stooge.
earn my trust with actions not with words,
Or get out of the way, and clear the field
For a progressive candidate who knows
Which side he's on, and how to win! Now go!

PRESIDENT leaves as WORKINGCLASSMAN addresses audience.
We, the people, must take back this house.
This fight's not over just cuz they retreat.
And to divide us they will always try
but the people, united, they cannot defeat!

CAST comes on stage as before, bows. ELAINE steps forward.

ELAINE
Thank, you, thank you. We want to thank all of you for coming tonight, and for all the other nights. Brothers and Sisters, you've always been a wonderful audience. But - it breaks my heart - but I'm sorry to have to say... it's over.

ELAINE breaks down.

AL
(to audience)
We just can't pay the bills anymore.

ELAINE
(fighting back tears)
Thank you all for being part of the fightback against corporate fascism, but Theater BAM is done. So keep up the fight, Power to the People –

LEON
Death to the Pigs!

ELAINE
And good-bye.

ELAINE starts to exit as HAVERLOCK stands up in the audience.

HAVERLOCK

Just a minute!

HAVERLOCK starts to stage.

ELAINE

Ms. Haverlock! What are you doing here?

HAVERLOCK

Elaine, you've got to let me help! Ladies and gentlemen, yesterday my company, Green Planet, made an offer to fund Theater BAM -

LEON

But we refused because we don't want to be the muzzled lapdogs of the corporate elite!

ELAINE

Ms. Haverlock, I told you we don't -

ELAINE AND HAVERLOCK

- take corporate money -

HAVERLOCK

I know! But these people, your audience, many of them work for corporations, right? Raise your hands if you do!

Members of audience raise hands, as does AL.

ELAINE

Al? I thought you worked at Rainbow Grocery, Modern Times, Greenpeace -

AL

And B of A.

ELAINE

A bank?

AL

I know! In the belly of the beast! But I got kids to feed!

SUZE, in audience, stands and raises her hand.

SUZE

Me, too!

ELAINE

You don't have kids!

SUZE

But if I did they'd starve on what a non-profit pays!

ELAINE notices that LEON'S hand is up, too.

ELAINE
(shocked)
Leon!

LEON
(again tortured)
I know! Sell out!

HAVERLOCK
You're not a sell out -

LEON
(still tortured)
Class traitor!

HAVERLOCK
No, you're not -

LEON
(super tortured)
Whore!

HAVERLOCK
Leon -

LEON
Call me whore!

HAVERLOCK
You're can still be a revolutionary.

LEON
A revolutionary whore!

HAVERLOCK
It's just a job, Leon, it's not who you are. And nobody says "death to the pigs" better than you.

LEON
(a glimmer of self-respect)
...Really?

HAVERLOCK
And Al, I bet working in the belly of the beast makes you even better at writing about the crimes of Capitalism!

AL
Hell, yeah!

HAVERLOCK
You see, Elaine? All these people pick their battles so they can live to fight another day!

ELAINE
I don't know...

SUZE
What - are you saying you're better than us?

ELAINE
No!

SUZE
That you're purer because you don't dirty your soul like us?

ELAINE
I'm not saying I'm better! I'm saying -

SUZE
That Theater BAM is better off dead than living like the rest of us! What kind of people's theater thinks it's better than the people? You always talk about the corporate elite... well, you're the one that sounds elitist!

Pause.

ELAINE
Is that how you all feel?

SUZE and AL raise their hands as if voting.

AL
We gotta be realistic...

ELAINE
Leon?

LEON raises his hand.

LEON
Whore...

ELAINE turns to the BAND in the pit.

ELAINE
Band?

BAND
Yeah? / Yeah. / I have kids, too! I think...

ELAINE considers for a moment, then -

ELAINE
Okay.

SUZE
Good!

ELAINE

But without me.

SUZE

What?

ELAINE

I quit.

ELAINE walks offstage.

HAVERLOCK

Oh dear!

SUZE

Elaine!

AL

It's not what she wants. Maybe we should let her go.

HAVERLOCK

But without an Artistic Director I don't know if you'll get the grant!

AL directs LEON offstage.

AL

Go get her!

HAVERLOCK

But then, she didn't want to money -

AL calls LEON back.

AL

Never mind.

HAVERLOCK

But the grant requirements -

AL directs LEON offstage.

AL

Go!

HAVERLOCK

But it is my foundation -

AL calls LEON back.

AL

Come on back.

HAVERLOCK

But without her -

AL
Oh fer christsake!

SUZE
I'll be the artistic director!

HAVERLOCK
You?

SUZE
I was a director here for five years, and if my sister is too stupid to see -

HAVERLOCK
Wonderful! I can guarantee that Green Planet will completely underwrite a new show!

AL
What kinda new show?

HAVERLOCK
An idea I've been working on! Everyone at Green Planet loves it! It's all about... the future!

AL
(disappointed)
Sounds like you don't need me. It's already written.

HAVERLOCK
We wouldn't think of having anyone else do it, Al! You're the writer for theater BAM! And Leon! You'll have your big speech.

LEON
(hopefully)
Death to the pigs?

HAVERLOCK
And Suze, you'll put it on stage!

SUZE
Damn right I will!

A very "Babes in Arms," "Hey, kids - We're gonna put on a show" moment.

HAVERLOCK
(dramatically)
Oh, this show will have everything - suffering, poverty, refugees, death, the madness of the modern world, the end of humanity -

LEON
This is going to be great!

AL
And what's the show called?

HAVERLOCK

It's called 2012: The Musical!

All exit..

SCENE FOUR

ON STAGE

A man in a white lab coat, DR. SINTERRA enters. He is hunch-backed, sniveling Igor of an assistant, who maniacally sets up the laboratory, checks various vials. LEON enters, costumed as a scientist, DR. MYOPIA (a cross between Dr. Frankenstein and Sherlock Holmes.) Both are wearing in masks, as in the Prologue. LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA) is brandishing a bound report.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Look at it, Sinterra! Isn't it magnificent?

DR. SINTERRA
(excited, obsequious)
Yes, magnificent, Doctor!

DOCTOR MYOPIA
A decade of research -

DR. SINTERRA
Tracking cosmic rays -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Measuring ice caps -

DR. SINTERRA
Counting and re-counting Polar Bears...

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Here it is! My life's work!

DR. SINTERRA
Your life's work!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
My vision!

DR. SINTERRA
The vision of Dr. Myopia!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
-scientific proof that human induced global warming is a colossal hoax!

DR. SINTERRA
They call it "climate change".

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
And I call it eco-fascist poppycock!

DR. SINTERRA
Tree hugging horse pucky!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
This is proof -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
That is proof!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
I have proven -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
You have proven!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
That blaming temperature changes, flooding, and atmospheric cataclysms on humans burning a little gasoline is insane!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Insane!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
So we put a few extra chemicals in the air -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
And the water -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
And the ground!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Without chemicals life itself would be impossible.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Exactly!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Exactly!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
And who do I have to thank for helping me with my research?

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(humbly)
Who?

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Who was there when the whole scientific community was against me?

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(very humbly)
Who, indeed?

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
(super humbly)
I think you know -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Doctor, I didn't think you'd noticed -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
The oil, gas and coal industries!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
What?

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Without their funding I never could have completed my research, removing responsibility of -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Climate change -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
From human beings forever!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(a bit hurt)
You know, I did a lot of stapling -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
The future will thank me!

OFFSTAGE ALIEN VOICES
We don't think so.

SINTERRA AND LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
What?

An ominous otherworldly sound and the appearance of ALIEN creatures who are very Ziggy Stardust.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Who are you people? How dare you barge in to my laboratory

Song, "MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE"

Al (as RED ALIEN)

WE COME FROM THE FUTURE

AND A GALAXY LIGHT YEARS AWAY,

BLUE ALIEN

WE BUILT AN ALIEN TIME MACHINE

TO BRING HERE TODAY!

SUZE (AS PINK ALIEN)

WE BRING A WARNING OF

THE EARTH'S IMPENDING FATE,

BLUE ALIEN

THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE YOUR WORLD

BEFORE IT GETS TOO LATE !

Victor Toman as RED ALIEN, Cory Censoprano as DR, MYOPIA, Siobhan Doherty as PINK ALIEN, Lizzie Calogero as DR. SINTERRA, Michael Gene Sullivan as BLUE ALIEN
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

ALL ALIENS

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE –

YOUR PLANET'S DYING, THE EARTH IS DYING!

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE –

YOUR PLANET'S DYING, THE EARTH IS DYING!

SUZE (AS PINK ALIEN)

IN 2012 WE WATCHED YOUR PEOPLE

MEET A TRAGIC END.

BLUE ALIEN

OCEANS FLOWED WITH BURNING OIL,

AND SKIES OF BLUE HAD TURNED TO RED!

AL (AS RED ALIEN)

YOUR LEADERS SEEMED SO SURPRISED

THEY HAD BEGUN TO BELIEVE THEIR OWN LIES

ALL ALIENS

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE –

YOUR PLANET'S DYING, THE EARTH IS DYING!

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE –

YOUR PLANET'S DYING, THE EARTH IS DYING -

PROFESSOR SINTERRA turns to PROFESSOR MYOPIA.

DOCTOR SINTERRA

It would appear that your bogus oil and chemical funded research is leading to the destruction of mother earth.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)

(betrayed)

My research?

DOCTOR SINTERRA

All I did was staple!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)

THE EARTH'S BEEN SACRIFICED

TO SATISFY CORPORATE NEED,

DOCTOR SINTERRA

OUR PLANET WON'T SURVIVE

IF WE CAN'T REGULATE THEIR GREED!

ALL

NO EXCUSES ANYMORE IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND

CORPORATIONS TO YOUR KNEES,

HEED THE EARTH'S DEMANDS!

HEED THE EARTH'S DEMANDS!

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE –

YOUR PLANET'S DYING, THE EARTH IS DYING!

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE

FORGET THE PROFIT, PROTECT THE PLANET!

MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE !

After the number ends SUZE and AL remove their wigs. SUZE picks up a script and clipboard.

SUZE

Okay. Good! One note: everybody turn out sharp on "Corporations, to you knees -" Really give it to them! Okay, scene five -

LEON

What about my "Death to the Pigs" speech?

AL

Scene Nine. I haven't written it yet!

LEON
Gotta get a "Death to the pigs.) The People expect it!

SUZE waves everyone offstage.

SUZE
Scene Five -

Before anyone can exit HAVERLOCK enters.

HAVERLOCK
May I make a suggestion?

SUZE
Ms. Haverlock, we really don't have time -

HAVERLOCK
I know, I know! And I don't want to interfere -

SUZE
You're not interfering -

HAVERLOCK
I just have one word:

SUZE
What?

HAVERLOCK
Compost!

SUZE, AL, AND LEON
Compost?

HAVERLOCK
That's what the scene should be about - composting and recycling!

AL
(referencing script)
No, this is scene four it's about the corporate criminals who are poisoning our planet for profit!

LEON
Death to the pigs!

AL
(to LEON)
That's scene nine!

HAVERLOCK
But... are corporations really the problem?

AL AND LEON
Yes!

HAVERLOCK
It just seems to me that if each one of us spent less time pointing fingers and more time being responsible for our own mess -

SUZE
Ms. Haverlock -

HAVERLOCK
But don't mind me! I have to go anyway - the Board at Green Planet have another meeting tonight about the next phase of your grant, and I have to report on how cooperative you've been... up to now...

HAVERLOCK starts to go.

SUZE
Wait a minute. Al, what if we -

AL
Suze...

SUZE
Come here -

SUZE pulls AL aside, whispers to him. After a moment.

AL
Fine!

LEON
Death to the pigs!

AL
Oh, Shut up!

AL exits.

SUZE
(to HAVERLOCK)
So, after "Corporations to your knees," we'll put in a part about composting.

HAVERLOCK
And recycling!

SUZE
(reluctantly)
And recycling.

HAVERLOCK
Oh good! Thank you, Suze, thank you! I'll make sure to tell the Board how helpful you've been.

SUZE starts to exit.

HAVERLOCK (CONT'D)
Though...

SUZE
What?

HAVERLOCK
"Corporations to your knees..." that's a bit harsh, isn't it? Just a thought.

HAVERLOCK exits. SUZE stews for a moment, then-

SUZE
Okay, everybody - top of five!

SUZE exits.

SCENE FIVE

IN RAND'S OFFICE.

A banner hangs on the back wall. The banner reads "PHEAUS for PRESIDENT." BOB enters with tray, decanter and glasses. RAND and SENATOR enter. RAND indicates "get out" to BOB, who scurries off.

RAND
(to SENATOR)
Ready for the big announcement?

PHAEUS
It's kind of a big jump, isn't it, Arthur? I'm just a first term Senator -

RAND
So was Obama! Besides, people like you!

PHAEUS
They do?

RAND
You're independent!

PHAEUS
I am?

RAND
You think for yourself!

PHAEUS
I do?

Buzz of intercom.

INTERCOM
Mr. Rand, the reporters are here.

PHAEUS
(panicking)
I'm not ready!

RAND
Skip.

PHAEUS
(flinching)
Don't hit me!

RAND
(in a calming voice)
Just tell them what's on your mind.

PHAEUS
I don't know what's on my mind!

REPORTERS enter.

RAND
Okay, boys, okay... you all know why we're here. Our nation is at a crossroads. Behind us a terrible - and completely unforeseeable - economic disaster. Ahead of us, years of painful recovery. These are difficult times, ladies and gentlemen, and difficult times call for difficult leadership! May I present to you the next President of these United States, Senator Skip Phaeus!

REPORTERS
Senator Phaeus! Senator Phaeus!

PHAEUS
(tentatively)
Hello...

RAND
I know you all have questions for the Senator, but remember - he will also be tweeting, Facebooking, and live-blogging -

PHAEUS pulls out smartphone, waves it at reporters

RAND
So please, please keep the questions short.

REPORTER 1
Senator, if you become President, what are your plans for the economy?

PHAEUS pauses, smiles broadly, then begins to furiously type the question into his phone, looking for an answer.

PHAEUS
What... are... your... plans...

RAND
(overlapping typing)
The Senator feels that the key to rebuilding our economy is unchaining the full power of the Free Market. How can we get America back on her feet if we keep business on it's knees?

PHAEUS
(still typing)
For...the...e...con...o...my...

RAND
Next question!

REPORTER 1
What would the Senator to say to families paying $5 a gallon for gas?

PHAEUS
(typing again)
What...would...I...say...

RAND
(overlapping typing)
He'd tell them we have untapped reserves right here in America! If it weren't for restrictions on domestic drilling we'd be up to our necks in oil!

REPORTER 2
What about unemployment?

RAND
The real problem in this country is that we pay people to not work! Unemployment benefits, welfare, social security... more like socialism security! We're destroying America with touchy-feely, anti-hard work, nanny state communism!!

SUZE rushes in. RAND looks with angry expectation at her.

RAND (CONT'D)
Suze!

SUZE
Mr. Rand, I'm sorry -

SUZE begins quickly rifling through her briefcase.

REPORTER 1
Senator -

PHAEUS
(tentatively)
Hello...

REPORTER 1
Can you tell us -

REPORTER 2
In your words -

PHAEUS
(horrified)
My... own... words?

REPORTER 1
With all that's happened - the economic downturn, the uprisings in the Middle east, the War in Terror, the Rise of China - what do you think America's position is in the world today?

RAND and PHAEUS both turn to SUZE, who is frantically going through the papers in her briefcase.

SUZE
(shocked)
I don't have it!

PHAEUS turns, terrified, to the REPORTERS.

PHAEUS
I... support the troops!

Suddenly ELAINE enters. She is dressed as we've never seen her, and her whole demeanor has changed - businesslike, yet very slinky, sexy - an efficient super-vamp.

SUZE and RAND
Elaine!

With a grand gesture ELAINE hands RAND a file of papers.

ELAINE
Here are the pages you asked for, Mr. Rand.

SUZE
(to ELAINE)
What are you doing here?

RAND
(to SUZE)
Your job!

SUZE
My...?

PHAEUS
(reading, very well)
America has always been more than a place; it's been an idea. An idea of freedom. And it is that idea of freedom that the rest of the world holds onto. Sometimes the envy of our freedom is the only thing that gets them up in the morning. But Ladies and gentlemen I am here to tell you that the idea of America is... under siege! Not just by the terrorists - who are hiding under their beds each night- but by a rot from within that is weakening the Idea of America, convincing us to open our borders, legalize drugs, get God out of our schools, and let homosexuals marry! If we don't stand up and fight now our children will have to struggle each day not only against the terrorists -who are outside your children's bedroom window right now, watching them -but against a government that wants to take their rights, and other "citizens" who want special rights. If we don't do something now, soon, today we will be leaving the next generation a poorer, weaker America without the idea of freedom. I don't want that for my children, and I don't think you want that for yours. Thank you.

The REPORTERS and RAND are all impressed and relieved at PHAEUS' answer

RAND

Okay! Pictures!

PHAEUS does some of his best poses from his model days.

RAND (CONT'D)

Alright, that's it, boys! Pick up a press release on your way out...

REPORTERS exit.

SUZE

(to RAND)

I'm sorry.

ELAINE

(offhandedly)

Suze was late working at the theatre...

PHAEUS

(to ELAINE)

Thank you for the speech. For a moment there I had no idea what to think!

ELAINE

You're welcome, Senator.

PHAEUS

(flirty)

Call me Skip -

RAND

Come on, Skip, let me see you to your car.

PHAEUS

(disappointed his flirting is again cut short)

But Arthur -

RAND and PHAEUS exit. SUZE takes in the new ELAINE.

SUZE

Elaine! What's going on?

ELAINE

Just taking your advice – about getting a real job. And you were right – this place is everything you said it was.

SUZE

But how did you –

ELAINE

I was cleaning out my desk at the theater. Phone rang. It was Rand, looking for you. I told him you were busy, he told me what he wanted. And what he'd pay to get it.

Song; "A GIRL COULD GET USED TO IT"

ELAINE

I WAS ALWAYS PLAYING FOR THE LOSING TEAM,

I WAS RUNNING IN PLACE,

RUNNING OUT OF STEAM,

AMERICANI CAN SEE HOW A GIRL COULD GET USED TO IT.

ALWAYS WAS STRAINING TO PAY THE BILLS,

NOW I'M SWIMMING IN GREEN UP TO MY GILLS,

MAKING THE SCENE, DRESSING TO KILL,

I CAN SEE HOW A GIRL COULD GET USED TO IT.

ALL THOSE YEARS OF STRUGGLE,

I DID MORE THAN MY SHARE,

NOW I'M LOOKING OUT FOR MYSELF,

I'M FINALLY GETTING SOMEWHERE!

USED TO AGONIZE OVER MORAL OBLIGATIONS,

NOW I'M MORE CONCERNED WITH

MY DINNER RESERVATIONS,

YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE WORLD,

BUT YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR SITUATION -

I CAN SEE HOW A GIRL COULD GET USED TO IT!

RAND enters.

RAND

Suze, you never told me your sister was such a cracker jack! She's been filling in while you were off doing your theater... thing.

ELAINE crosses to RAND, who takes in her sexiness. ELAINE casts a condescending eye toward SUZE.

ELAINE
(to RAND)
You know, Suze is quite a good little director. She quit theater to get into the "real money," but now I think she knows where she belongs.

SUZE
I belong here!

RAND
But you haven't been here, doll. You've been missing meetings, you missed the press conference -

ELAINE
You even missed the sale at Banana Republic.

SUZE
(shocked)
I did?

RAND
Now, I love theater - I've seen Spiderman the musical three times - and I don't want to get in the way of your theater... thing - but I need someone who listen and knows what I'm thinking. Like the old Suze!

SUZE
I still know!

RAND
Really? What musical did I just say I saw three times?

SUZE
Um.... Shrek?

RAND
Elaine?

ELAINE pulls out her phone, plays recording.

RAND'S VOICE
"Spiderman, the musical - "

RAND
Elaine here had the idea to record everything I say.

ELAINE
Very convenient -

SUZE
But you said I had that special something!

RAND
You did. But now you're busy, you're distracted, and you're... Elaine, what was that word I used?

ELAINE plays the recording.

RAND'S VOICE

Fired!

ELAINE AND SUZE

Mr. Rand -

ELAINE

(to RAND)

You have an appointment.

RAND

Get the car ready.

ELAINE

(to SUZE)

Looks like I do have a marketable skill after all.

ELAINE exits.

SUZE

Mr. Rand, I know I've been remiss lately, but once the show is open -

RAND

Sorry, doll. Next time keep your eye on the ball.

RAND exits.

SUZE

Mr. Rand! Wait!

SUZE exits.

SCENE SIX

ON STAGE.

In a jungle. LEON (AS DOCTOR MYOPIA) and DOCTOR SINTERRA enter.

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Doctor, where are we?

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Judging from the flora and fauna, it is my judgement -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(dramatically fawning)
Your judgement!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
That we are -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
The judgement of Doctor Myopia!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
That we are -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Are -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
-in -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
-in -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
The Jungle!

DOCTOR SINTERRA
In the jungle!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
But why would the aliens send us to the jungle?

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Look at all the life! It's amazing!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Professor, scientists are not amazed.

DOCTOR SINTERRA
It's so beautiful!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Scientists don't recognize beauty.

DOCTOR SINTERRA
I feel like singing!

SINTERRA takes a deep breath to start singing.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
No singing! This is why I never let you out of the laboratory.

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Sorry.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
The jungle...

DOCTOR SINTERRA
The jungle!

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Why -

DOCTOR SINTERRA
Why -

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Would the aliens send us here...

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(as an echo)
Here, here, here...

A MAYAN PRIEST, in traditional almost naked garb, suddenly enters.

MAYAN PRIEST
To learn!

The two PROFESSOR are stunned and surprised.

LEON (AS DR. MYOPIA)
Who are you?

DOCTOR SINTERRA
And why aren't you wearing pants?

MAYAN PRIEST
My name is Ch'am-ak'ta.

DOCTOR SINTERRA
(to MYOPIA)
Why isn't he wearing pants?

The MAYAN PRIEST points an accusing finger at the two scientists.

MAYAN PRIEST

Modern men! You have convinced yourselves that everything modern is good, that your way of life is the only way of life. Out here, in the jungle, surrounded by life, we watch the cycle of the universe. We understand the transformations of life and death, and we know our Mother Earth is about to enter a new, frightening stage of spiritual and physical evolution! Your world is dying, and only those who embrace that evolution will survive!

DOCTOR SINTERRA

(fearfully)

Without pants?

MAYAN PRIEST begins to chant and dance. His dance becomes more and more elaborate, like a Vegas version of a MAYAN dance. Then –

MAYAN PRIEST

This is 2012! The End of the World!

SUZE enters.

SUZE

Hold it, hold it... Al?

AL enters, with script.

AL

What?

SUZE

"The end of the world"?

AL

It got changed.

SUZE

And that dance?

AL

Not my idea.

SUZE

Change the lines back.

AL

(to cast)

Change the lines back!

MAYAN PRIEST

(relieved)

Right - (with much more passion) "Capitalist greed has driven you - "

HAVERLOCK enters.

HAVERLOCK

Don't touch it, Al!

SUZE

But... Ms. Haverlock, this scene is supposed to be about how to save the environment.

HAVERLOCK

(to cast)

Everybody... take five!

Cast look to SUZE.

SUZE

Okay...

Cast leaves.

HAVERLOCK

Suze, Suze, Suze, this scene is about the End of Humanity.

SUZE

We want to inspire people, not just scare them. If they're all gonna die anyway there's no reason to change things! Al!

HAVERLOCK

I want them scared!

SUZE

It's gonna make them feel hopeless!

HAVERLOCK

This is the scene I want! Do you have a problem with that?

SUZE doesn't answer

HAVERLOCK

I thought we were on the same page with this. I guess I was wrong.

SUZE

Thank you. (calling offstage) Al!

HAVERLOCK

Not wrong about the line. About Theater BAM!

SUZE

What?

HAVERLOCK

Maybe this is the wrong theater to give this grant to...

SUZE

But you've already given us -

HAVERLOCK
And we'd have to ask for it back...

SUZE
We've already spent -

HAVERLOCK
Not my problem.

SUZE
We can't pay off those debts!

HAVERLOCK
Then you don't have any choice, do you? Suze?

SUZE takes in her the meaning of HAVERLOCK' s words.

SUZE
(painfully)
No.

HAVERLOCK
Wonderful! Now, let's take it from the top. And Suze... please let's not argue in front of the cast again. It gives the wrong impression of who's in charge.

SUZE starts to exit.

HAVERLOCK (CONT'D)
Did you hear me?

SUZE pauses, humiliated.

SUZE
Yes.

SUZE & HAVERLOCK
(both, to cast)
Alright -

HAVERLOCK looks at SUZE, who crumples.

HAVERLOCK
Places!

SUZE, seething, exits.

HAVERLOCK (CONT'D)
And this time I want to see more fear from the scientists! Band, could you pick up the tempo in the dance? I really want to see that Mayan shake it. And everybody: let's make it, "It's the end of the world, and there's nothing you can do about it!" Okay? Okay?

ALL
(backstage and pit)

Yes!

HAVERLOCK

Good! Places, everyone - last run-through before opening!

HAVERLOCK exits.

SCENE SEVEN

ON THE STREET.

A taco truck enters. It drives across the stage and parks, after which LEON and SUZE, fresh from rehearsal, enter and cross to it. Working inside the truck is the TACO VENDER.

LEON
I hope this is okay.

On the other side of the stage the chairs and table of a fancy restaurant appear. ELAINE and RAND, elegantly dressed, enter and cross to the restaurant.

The following scenes run parallel - Taco Truck/Fancy Restaurant - with the two couples in different places, and not necessarily at the same times.

ELAINE
(smiling)
I've never been to this restaurant before...

RAND
I'm not surprised. You have to be a third generation just to get a reservation.

ELAINE
A third generation what?

RAND
A third generation somebody.

At the TACO TRUCK: LEON goes to the window of the TACO VENDER, orders burritos.

LEON
(to SUZE)
You don't want super, do you? I don't get paid 'till Tuesday -

In the FANCY RESTAURANT: RAND orders steaks.

ELAINE
(to RAND, with serious double-entendre)
Well, I don't have any reservations...

RAND
And that's what I like about you, Elaine. You're the kind of girl who sees what she wants, reaches out, and takes it. Just like me! Not the girl part – the reaching out and taking part.

At the TACO TRUCK:

SUZE
But it's all wrong! I know we need the money, but -

LEON
What else can we do? You said it yourself - we have to keep the lights on.

SUZE
I know... but how do I keep the lights on... *(tragically)* IN MY SOUL!

LEON
Hey, that's my line!

In the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Voters! Those idiots pick anybody with a slick haircut who can make them feel good about themselves while scaring them about the next guy.

ELAINE
Like Senator Skip?

RAND
Exactly! So, in 2012 I'm taking special precautions... making sure only the right people get to vote...

ELAINE
Diebold?

RAND
Too risky. One slip and some reporter does an investigation.

ELAINE
(sarcastically)
Do reporters still do that?

RAND and ELAINE laugh.

At the TACO TRUCK:

SUZE
It's a trap! They hook you with their dough and get you to dance to their tune.

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Would you like to dance?

ELAINE
Why, Mr. Rand, I believe you're drunk.

RAND
I don't need booze to show me that you're the kind of assistant a man like me needs - smart, sexy, sassy... and most importantly your not a -

SUZE and RAND begin to tango.

AT the TACO TRUCK:

SUZE
Whore! That's what I am!

LEON
You told me it's not a big deal, you gotta pay the bills -

SUZE
And that's it? That's how you justify selling out?

LEON
I...I don't justify selling out! I'm not talking about me - You, you're the one who -

SUZE
That's how the Man gets you!

LEON
The Man?

SUZE
He finds out what you really want, what you need, and then he sticks a price tag on it! "There it is! You want it bad enough? You gotta pay the price!" And you gotta get that job, you gotta get that grant, get that corporate sponsor so you can pay the Man!

LEON
Again with the Man! That's what I was saying!

SUZE
You didn't say that!

LEON
I said something like that! But it was stupid when I said it, huh?

SUZE
Leon -

LEON
I can't believe I wanted to get a go out with you! You're just a big, fat -

FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Lesbian. That's the difference between you and Suze. With you a man feels like a man, like he has a chance. Don't get me wrong, I like a challenge. But what's the point of climbing a tough, hard -

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON

Hypocrite!

FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND

When you can just drive down into a beautiful lush valley?

ELAINE

You said something about the right voters -

RAND

Ah, yes! The secret...is voter fraud!

ELAINE

(excitedly)

Voter fraud!

RAND

Yep. I'm against it.

ELAINE

(surprised)

You are?

RAND

I'm sinking millions into campaigns around the country, stripping people from the voting roles who shouldn't be there. Starts with illegal immigrants.

ELAINE

Illegal immigrants can't vote.

RAND

Doesn't mater. Most Americans are scared to death of –

At the TACO TRUCK:

TACO VENDER, holding two burritos, sticks his head out of the truck.

VENDER

Burritos?

FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND

Immigrants! Then we're talking old people - baby boomers who wanna vote lefty like they did in the Sixties but, oh? Don't have valid a driver's license anymore? Too bad! Boom! Out! Students full of hope and change and crap, but with the wrong kind of ID. Boom! Out! Hell, we're even gonna get literacy tests back - get rid of some of the legal immigrants who only know one word in English - (with accent) DEM-O-CRAT. Boom! Boom! Boom!

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON
(accusingly)
You wanted to direct the show!

SUZE
That was before all the changes, all the cooperate, money censorship.

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Bribe a few judges, blackmail some Congressmen, it's all good.

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON
Isn't that against the law?

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Heck, soon I'll own my own President! Keep people scared, change the laws, make it all voter fraud, talk about America, and I'm being a patriot, not -

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON
Such a phony! All this time I've been feeling so tortured, so dirty, like a -

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND
Criminal.

ELAINE
How very brilliant! You've made it very tempting to be a -

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON
Traitor! All this time I've been trying to fight the good fight and you -

SUZE
And I've been a -

BOTH LOCATIONS:

ELAINE AND SUZE
Class warrior for the other side.

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

RAND

The class war is over, Elaine, and there is only one side now. The winning side.. Everyone one else is the help.

At the TACO TRUCK:

LEON

I'm not saying that.

SUZE

It doesn't matter, Leon. There's nothing we can do about it. It's a corporate world. The Free Market of ideas, and I guess there aren't many buyers for what we're selling.

LEON

So... what? We don't go down fighting?

SUZE

Who'd notice?

At the FANCY RESTAURANT:

ELAINE

Oh, look at the time...

At the TACO TRUCK:.

SUZE

Curtain goes up in a little while.

ELAINE and SUZE

I gotta go.

RAND and LEON

(disappointed)

But it's early!

ELAINE AND SUZE

No, it's late.

ELAINE and SUZE exit, followed by LEON and RAND.

SCENE EIGHT

ON STAGE

Opening night. MS. HAVERLOCK enters to address the audience from the stage before the show.

HAVERLOCK

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for coming to the opening night of Theater BAM's production - "2012 - The Musical!", brought to you by Green Planet Incorporated, and also let's give a special thanks to the sponsors of our pre-show reception, the wonderful people at International Amalgamated Cheese Industries, (sings jingle) "Cheese that's well rated must be Amalgamated!" And I also wanted to let you know that we have a special guest after tonight's show, so don't go anywhere! Unless it's out to the lobby for some of that yummy Amalgamated Cheese! And now... on with 2012: The Musical!

HAVERLOCK exits, and after a pretentious, ominous musical overture -

ANNOUNCER

Five hundred years ago, in France, a prophet named Nostradamus made amazing predictions about the apocalyptic end of days...

NOSTRADAMUS enters, looking prophetic.

NOSTRADAMUS

From the sky will come a great King of Terror...
The sky will burn at forty-five degrees.
Fire approaches the great new city...

ANNOUNCER

Five hundred years before that, in the jungles of the Yucatan, the great Mayan astronomers predicted the end of the world in fire and water...

MAYAN PRIEST enters, looking mystical.

MAYAN PRIEST

The alligator god will vomit forth unending rain that will wash away all mankind!

ANNOUNCER

And one thousand years before that a humble carpenter from Bethlehem spoke to the meek about the coming Judgement Day.

JESUS enters, looking all Christ-y.

JESUS

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

ANNOUNCER

Besides their ability to see into the future, to see to the end of humanity, to see the end of time itself, what do these three great men have in common? That they are all with us tonight...and are ready to par-tay!

A super funky disco tune kicks into immediate high gear, as NOSTRADAMUS, MAYAN PRIEST, and JESUS bust serious moves.

Song: "PARTY, PARTY, PARTY"

JESUS

I KNOW THAT LIFE CAN BRING YOU DOWN,

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH PAIN GOING ROUND.

BUT NOW THAT RAPTURE'S JUST ONE YEAR AWAY

WE'RE GONNA HAVE A PARTY TILL JUDGEMENT DAY!

ALL

SO GET SOME NEW TATTOOS,

SOME TOP SHELF BOOZE,

THERE'S NO NEED TO READ THE NEWS,

JUST PARTY, PARTY, P ARTY!

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM,

SHAKE THAT BIG BOTTOM,

ARMAGEDDON'S GONNA BE AWESOME,

IT'S A PARTY, PARTY, PARTY!

MAYEN PRIEST

NO NEED TO WORRY

ABOUT FUTURE GENERATIONS,

MASS DEFORESTATIONS, OR NUCLEAR RADIATION.

BE SURE TO SPEND EVERY PENNY

THAT YOU'RE MAKIN'

TAKE YOUR GIRL ON A VACATION -

GET AN EXTRA SIDE OF BACON!

NOSTRADAMUS

IF YOU'VE BEEN KEEPIN' THE COMMANDMENTS

YOU'LL BE MAXIN' AND CHILLAXIN'

WITH THE CHOSEN ONES!

BUT FOR ALL YOU HEATHENS

THAT'S ANOTHER STORY,

YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO DOWN

IN A BLAZE OF GLORY!

ALL

RAISE ANOTHER GLASS,

SKIP YOUR YOGA CLASS,

JUST BE SURE TO GO TO MASS,

AND PARTY, PARTY, PARTY!

RAPTURE'S ALMOST HERE,

CRACK ANOTHER BEER,

THERE'S ONLY ONE MORE YEAR,

SO LET'S PARTY, PARTY, PARTY!

NOSTRADAMUS

YOU DON'T NEED TO VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTION -

MAYAN PRIEST

YOU DON'T NEED TO SEE THE DOCTOR

ABOUT THAT LITTLE INFECTION -

JESUS

JUST BE SET FOR INSPECTION

WHEN I MAKES MY SELECTIONS,

YOU'LL BE FLOATING UP TO HEAVEN

UNDER GOD'S PROTECTION!

Michael Gene Sullivan as JESUS, Cory Censoprano as NASTRADAMUS, Victor Toman as MAYAN PRIEST
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

ALL

SO GET SOME NEW TATTOOS,

SOME TOP SHELF BOOZE,

THERE'S NO NEED TO READ THE NEWS,

JUST PARTY, PARTY, PARTY!

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM,

SHAKE THAT BIG BOTTOM,

ARMAGEDDON'S GONNA BE AWESOME -

IT'S A PARTY, PARTY, PARTY!

The number ends in a blaze of discopallozza, and three dance off as we transition backstage.

SUZE enters, followed by HAVERLOCK.

SUZE
(to HAVERLOCK, outraged)
Amalgamated Cheese?

HAVERLOCK
What were you going to serve them at the reception- homemade humus and oat cakes?

SUZE
We don't have receptions, we have pot-lucks!

HAVERLOCK
People with money don't bring their own food.

SUZE
What's next logo's on costumes? Product placement?

HAVERLOCK
As a matter of fact -

SUZE
Oh, god!

HAVERLOCK
In Scene 8, instead of plain sandals, I was thinking Jesus could wear Doc Martens! I can get them to sponsor -

SUZE has had enough.

SUZE
(exploding)
No!

HAVERLOCK
You can't just say no!

SUZE
No!

HAVERLOCK
Suze, we need this money if the show is going to tour...

SUZE
Tour?

HAVERLOCK
I've discussed it with your Board, and we want this show to go across the country! Theater BAM is finally going to get the audience it's always wanted! And did I mention - they invited me to join! I'm the new President!

SUZE
Ms. Haverlock, this isn't working out.

HAVERLOCK
What do you mean?

SUZE
This, all of this! This isn't Theater BAM, this isn't what we're about!

HAVERLOCK
This is what it takes, Suze, get used to it. Now I have to go make sure everyone is in place for the second act. We'll finish this later.

HAVERLOCK leaves.

SUZE
It's not just about the money! It's about meaning!

ELAINE enters, slowly with slow ironic clap.

ELAINE
What a nice speech. So heartfelt.

SUZE
You here to gloat?

ELAINE
Don't be like that, Suze. We can't all be winners.

SUZE
(angrily)
You stabbed me in the back!

ELAINE
(angrily)
You stabbed yourself in the back!

SUZE
That's not even possible!

ELAINE
You were so eager to prove I was wrong about taking corporate money that you completely sold out!

SUZE
No I didn't!

ELAINE
Composting will save the world? Jesus will save your soul? Amalgamated Cheese?

SUZE, realizing her error, finally breaks down.

SUZE
(broken)
Oh, Elaine, you were right!

ELAINE
I'm sorry, I didn't catch that...

SUZE
You were right! About the money, you were right!

ELAINE
Suze -

SUZE
Don't call me Suze - call me whore!

RAND enters.

RAND
Elaine, doll, come on. Intermission's almost over.

ELAINE
Just a minute, Mr. Rand... there's just two more things I want to say to Suze -

ELAINE crosses to SUZE.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
First of all... (gives SUZE a big hug) I love you, baby sister. And second, Theater BAM isn't going to have to worry about money for a long time.

ELAINE points to RAND.

ELAINE
Thanks to him!

RAND
Me?

ELAINE
I think you're going to make some rather large anonymous donations.

RAND
Why would I do that?

ELAINE reaches into her dress and pulls out her phone..

ELAINE
Remember this? I've been recording everything you said.

ELAINE plays a recording of RAND'S voice.

RAND'S VOICE
"Bribe a few judges, blackmail some congressmen, it's all good"

ELAINE
I think someone is going to pay dearly to keep this out of the right hands.

SUZE
Blackmail?

ELAINE
Think of it as re-appropriation.

RAND
You'll never get away with this!

HAVERLOCK enters.

HAVERLOCK
Arthur Rand! What are you doing backstage? What's going on?

SUZE
Elaine recorded him in a compromising situation.

HAVERLOCK
(slyly)
Really?

ELAINE
It's not what you think!

HAVERLOCK
Let me hear it!

ELAINE
Here.

ELAINE hands HAVERLOCK the phone. HAVERLOCK plays it.

RAND'S VOICE
"Heck, soon I'll own my own president."

HAVERLOCK
(to RAND)
I can't believe you said that!

ELAINE
I know! He wanted me to record him!

HAVERLOCK
I can't believe you'd be so brazen, so ruthless, so stupid –

RAND
I'm sorry, honey!

ELAINE and SUZE pause in their celebration.

ELAINE AND SUZE
(stunned)
Honey?

HAVERLOCK
You see, girls, this is what happens when you marry beneath yourself.

ELAINE and SUZE are even more stunned.

ELAINE AND SUZE
Married?

RAND
(to HAVERLOCK)
I said I was sorry.

ELAINE and SUZE are still even more stunned.

ELAINE AND SUZE
Married?

HAVERLOCK
(to ELAINE)
Close your mouth, dear. You look like fish.

ELAINE
You're married?

RAND
(like a loving child)
Thirty-two of the best years of my life!

HAVERLOCK
(to RAND)
Being obsequious won't help - I'm still very angry with you!

ELAINE
What's going on? Who are you people?

HAVERLOCK
Well, cat's out of the bag, I might as well tell it all: a few years ago Arthur and I and some friends decided that owning newspapers and television stations wasn't enough. There was still too much "information" getting out there.

RAND
Public radio, P.B.S., the Internet -

HAVERLOCK
(like a whip crack)
Did I give you permission speak?

RAND
(pitiful)
Sorry.

HAVERLOCK
We tried cutting government funding, gutted net neutrality but that didn't kill them off. So we decided what we couldn't kill we'd control.

RAND
With funding!

HAVERLOCK
(whip crack)
Hush!

ELAINE
But why Theater BAM!?

HAVERLOCK
Well, you've already spoiled my surprise, so... as you know my husband loves theater -

RAND
Mommy?

HAVERLOCK
(relenting)
Alright...

RAND
(like a proud child)
I saw Spiderman the Musical three times!

HAVERLOCK
And so I thought what better anniversary gift than a little theater company of his own?

SUZE
You ruined this theater... for a present?

RAND
(thrilled)
Mommy!

HAVERLOCK
(to RAND)
Happy Anniversary!

ELAINE
What about Green Planet?

HAVERLOCK
A wholly owned subsidiary of Rand Incorporated. And now -

HAVERLOCK holds up the phone, very deliberatively erases the recording, then hands phone back to ELAINE.

HAVERLOCK (CONT'D)
I'd like to get back and watch the rest of the show. Thank you so much for the recording, Elaine. Come along, Arthur.

RAND
Does mommy-ugums forgive her turtle boy?

HAVERLOCK
(rubbing RAND's belly)
Of course!

HAVERLOCK exits, after which RAND returns to his hard, businesslike self.

RAND
Bye, dolls, and remember, when you fight with the big dog, ya gotta be prepared to -

HAVERLOCK
(offstage)
Arthur!

RAND quickly reverts to his submissive self.

RAND
Coming, mommy!

RAND exits. Silence. SUZE turns to her sister.

SUZE
So... you never really-

ELAINE
I just wanted to get something on him, and show you what a bastard he is.

SUZE
And the blackmail? What about not accepting funding from a system you're trying to overthrow?

ELAINE
It's one thing to accept it- it's another thing to snatch it from them.

SUZE
Very dramatic

ELAINE
That's my job.

SUZE
I never should have doubted you.

ELAINE and SUZE hug, PHAEUS enters, sees two women hugging, is kinda turned on.

PHAEUS
Hello...

ELAINE
Senator!

PHAEUS
(flirty)
Call me Skip.

SUZE
What are you doing here?

PHAEUS
Arthur's wife called, said she had a surprise for Arthur tonight, gave me a little speech to say after the show.

PHAEUS takes out 3x5 card, reads:

PHAEUS
"Arthur Rand is not just a man, he is an idea. An idea of freedom.. But the idea of Arthur Rand... is under siege!"

SUZE and ELAINE make eye contact.

SUZE
Skip -

PHAEUS
What?

ELAINE
Skip -

PHAEUS

What?

SUZE

There's been a change of plan.

PHAEUS

There has?

ELAINE

Something new.

PHAEUS

There is?

ELAINE

Come with us, Senator.

PHAEUS

(flirty)

Ladies...

ELAINE AND SUZE

(flirty)

Skip...

PHAEUS

Well, alright!

ALL exit.

SCENE NINE

ON STAGE

HAVERLOCK enters, addresses audience.

HAVERLOCK
And now, for our special guest! You all know him - though few of you long-term Bam supporters voted for him. Here he is, Senator Skip Phaeus!

PHAEUS enters, as HAVERLOCK, applauding, exits.

PHAEUS
(to audience)
Hello. The World has always been more than just a place, it's been an idea. And right now it's a very scary idea! You just saw all the things to be afraid of... except for one, the worst of all - the people who benefit from keeping us afraid!

PHAEUS pulls out 3x5 card, reads.

Song: "ARMAGEDDON"

PHAEUS

ARMAGEDDON? JUST A DISTRACTION.

THAT SERVES THE FORCES, OF REACTION.

APOCALYPTIC VISIONS OF ANNIHILATION,

BREED MORE FEAR AND ALIENATION!

HAVERLOCK and RAND, hearing PHAEUS' speech, enter from behind the curtain.

RAND
What's he saying?

HAVERLOCK
That's not what I gave him!

PHAEUS

IN THE U.S. OF AMNESIA,

WHERE SO MANY SEEK ANESTHESIA,

CRUCIAL TO CONTROLLING US IS THAT

WE BE AFRAID –

SO WE WON'T SEE HOW WE'RE BEING PLAYED!

RAND races onstage, grabs PHAEUS.

RAND

Skip!

PHAEUS

Arthur, this is great! (indicating audience) They like me!

SUZE enters, at a run.

SUZE

(to audience)

Theater BAM is being taken over!

HAVERLOCK

Suze!

SUZE

Green Planet is just a front for the corporate pigs!

HAVERLOCK

Stop her, Arthur!

SUZE leaves, pursued by RAND and HAVERLOCK.

PHAEUS

(to audience)

PLAYED BY THE BANKERS WHO MADE

THE ECONOMY FAIL,

AND KEPT OUT WHAT THEY STOLE,

AND STAYED OUT OF JAIL!

PLAYED BY THE MEDIA MOGULS

WHO CONSTANTLY LIE,

WHO DISTRACT AND DISTORT

SO DEMOCRACY DIES!

ELAINE enters, at a run.

ELAINE

(to audience)

Corporations are privatizing the whole country!

RAND enters.

RAND

Shut up!

ELAINE exits, pursued by RAND.

PHAEUS
(to audience)

LIFE BUT A SERIES OF BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS,

WITH EVER INCREASING RESOURCE EXTRACTION.

THE WORLD, SUSTAINED,

CAN MEET ALL OF OUR NEEDS,

BUT NOT IF IT'S RUN FOR CORPORATE GREED -

BUT NOT IF IT'S RUN FOR CORPORATE GREED!

LEON enters, at a run.

LEON
Death to the pigs!

HAVERLOCK enters.

HAVERLOCK
I cut that line!

LEON exits pursued by HAVERLOCK.

PHAEUS

NOT IF IT'S RUN FOR CORPORATE GREED!

WHEN PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER AFRAID

IS WHEN THEY TAKE TO THE BARRICADES!

SO STRIDE ON THROUGH THE LIES AND SPIN,

YOU JUST CAN'T LET THE BASTARDS WIN –

ELAINE, SUZE, and LEON enter, pursued by HAVERLOCK and RAND.

PHAEUS

YOU JUST CAN'T LET THE BASTARDS WIN!

ELAINE, SUZE, and LEON are finally cornered by HAVERLOCK and RAND. PHAEUS is thrilled at the audience response to his speech, and steps between the Theatre BAM! members and RAND/HAVERLOCK.

PHAEUS (CONT'D)
(shaking RAND's hand)
I've never felt so good making a speech before! We'll have to do that again! Oh, and... happy anniversary!

PHAEUS exits.

HAVERLOCK
(to ELAINE et al.)
You... you've ruined everything!

LEON
When it comes to the oppressor -

SUZE
That's our job!

HAVERLOCK
Tomorrow I will have the Board of Theater BAM vote all of you out! This is my theater!

RAND
But Evelyn -

HAVERLOCK
I mean our theater!

ELAINE
Well, not until tomorrow! Right now it's still ours, and we're talking to our audience!

HAVERLOCK
Fine! Have your moment....

HAVERLOCK looks dismissively at the audience

HAVERLOCK
Most of them work for us, anyway. And there's nothing they can do about it! Come along, turtle boy.

RAND
Yes, mommy!

HAVERLOCK and RAND exit. LEON gestures to give center stage to ELAINE.

LEON
Elaine...

ELAINE doesn't quite know what to say to audience.

ELAINE
(shout to backstage)
Al!

AL enters, hands ELAINE a piece of paper..

ELAINE
(reading)
"Comrades, the question isn't should you feel bad about working for a corporation, the question is why do we support a system where so many of us have to work for our enemies? They poison our food, poison or air, bankrupt us, foreclose on us, destroy our civil rights, undermine or democracy" Kind of a long list, Al.

AL
You try summing up corporate crimes in one paragraph!

SUZE
(to audience)
The point is we need to create a system where people don't think they have to work for the bastards who are profiting from killing us!

LEON
(thrilled)
Bastards? You called them bastards! Oh, Suze -

SUZE
Leon, I told you, I'm a -

LEON holds up his hand, stops her.

LEON
Lesbian. I know. (sincerely) I'm just proud that you're my friend.

LEON holds his hand out for SUZE, who takes and shakes it. The Cast turns to the audience. The remaining lines are delivered to the audience, basically as a curtain speech.

ELAINE
So, comrades, we've made a decision. We are, all of us, quitting!

AL
Right before they fire us!

ELAINE
If we can't tell the truth, we're done with Theater BAM.

SUZE
So we've decided to start a new theater!

LEON
And this time we're gonna be a collective! It'll be great!

AL
But we don't have a name yet. Any suggestions?

Audience members may shout out suggestions.

ELAINE
Okay! We're just putting it together.

SUZE
We don't have any funding yet -

ELAINE
And exposing the crimes of our crypto-fascistic Capitalist would-be overlords is still a tough sell to big funders. So screw 'em!

SUZE
We're gonna leave the funding up to you, our real supporters, the People!

AL
And as soon as we get the dough we will be in a theater, or union hall or park near you!

ELAINE
Keep an eye out for us. And until then, remember -

ALL
Power to the People -

LEON turns to ELAINE, SUZE, and AL.

LEON
(hopefully)
And Death to the Pigs..?

The Cast consider it for a moment, then:

ALL
(triumphantly)
And Death to the Pigs!

End of Play

For The Greater Good

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan

Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran

(Adapted from “The Poor of New York,”
by Dion Boucicault)

FOR THE
GREATER
GOOD
OR
THE LAST ELECTION
NO MORE TUITION HIKES
OCCUP
OCCUPY WALL STREET
SPAIN '12
SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

Remember Occupy?

Remember the camps, the protests, and how the corporate media insisted and insisted and insisted the Occupiers had no coherent message? Ad remember, despite the passionate speeches and manifestos, how so many of the Americans Occupy was fighting for believed it when the corporations said this critique of corporate rule was nonsense?

Of course you do.

But wait - was the problem simply that the real heroic story of the brilliant Capitalists just wasn't being told accurately? That their dreams of An Randian glory was simply not cast in the right light of selfless selfishness? And were those stinky, hoody-wearing Occupiers the real villains in the fight for civilization?

Probably not.

But they were in the high style of this grand ironic melodrama, which ultimately asks -

Did you buy the corporate hype?

"In the Mime Troupe's latest biting lampoon it's the 99 percent, who are to blame for the world's suffering. Only by sacrificing everything they have can the poor become worthy of serving their betters. After all that's pretty much the view of the world one gets from the average Fox News broadcast. As is always the case with this Tony-winning band of left-wing rabble rousers, politics is the thing. Their point of view is part Groucho, part Karl, but all Marx."
SAN JOSE MERCURY

"*The Mime Troupe — funny as ever, and loaded as ever with witty, tuneful songs, paints in varied shades this time around, eschewing a black-and-white, good-guys-bad-guys scenario in favor of a more nuanced approach to its well-established radical agenda. Now, when our country is as politically polarized as it's ever been, how clever and subversive to undermine a national inclination to demonize apparent enemies. Instead, the troupe shows how things fall apart if we citizens fail to scrutinize the issues. It's a lesson taught with the greatest comic skills, but it's a serious lesson that rightfully ought to leave us amused — and uneasy.*"
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

"An awfully funny show, and its opposite-day conceit ingeniously turns the inherent reductionism of agitprop fables into an object of parody."
MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Jack Badger
Gideon Bloodgood
Alida Bloodgood
Lucy Fairweather
Mrs. Fairweather
Damian Landless
Captain Fairweather
Clarence
First Occupier
Second Occupier
Third Occupier
Fourth Occupier
Mr. Puffy
Mrs. Puffy
Chorus

FOR THE GREATER GOOD opened July 4th, 2012 in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan, with the following cast:

Jack Badger, Mr Puffy, Third Occupier……Victor Toman*
Gideon Bloodgood……Ed Holmes*
Alida Bloodgood, Mrs. Bloodgood, Mrs. Puffy,
Second Occupier……..Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Mrs. Fairweather, Clarence,
First Occupier……..…Keiko Shimosato, Carreiro*
Lucy Fairweather, Captain Fairweather,
Third Occupier……..Velina Brown*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

PROLOGUE

A bare stage with three levels. The highest level is abstractly adorned with the architecture of wealth: a parquet floor, a large wooden door, an ornate balustrade, and a large, leather, wingback chair.

There is a staircase down to a middle level which, as it descends, becomes duller, more pedestrian. The middle level, while not as ornate as the top level, is painted in what were, at some point, bright colors, now faded.

A few steps below is the lowest level. The ground is cracked sidewalk, dirty and forgotten.

On the wall that fronts the platform from the highest level to the lowest there is also a degradation of color from polished perfection to what appears to be the side of a cardboard box.

Following a fanfare a man, JACK BADGER, enters. He is dressed in the brash colors and patterns of a cheap showman. After an elaborate flourish he addresses the audience with in the style of a melodramatic impresario.

(Note: The style of the show is a traditional melodrama it is heavily underscored - character themes, emotional beats, the whole, dramatic gasps, etc. Also remember - this is an very broad melodrama, and it is essential for the irony of the play that the actors stay true to their melodramatic archetypes! Whenever the stage direction indicates "TABLEAU" the actors in that part of the stage should freeze in a dramatic tableau, resuming movement when they next speak. This is different from simply "freezing," as the tableau should physically express the heightened emotion/ drama/conflict/passion of the melodramatic moment)

BADGER
(to audience)
Ladies and Gentlemen! Welcome! To the (...) Theatre! (Fanfare) Theater...a place of Love... and Death! Romance... and Mystery! Where the forces of Good forever struggle against the powers of Evil in an endless, brutal battle that may destroy our very world... and all for your entertainment. Tonight(!) We present to you a tale of poverty and power, rags and riches: For the Greater Good! (Fanfare) But before we begin please, please allow me to introduce the characters in this afternoons melodrama:

As each character is introduced, they enter and strike a dramatic pose that typifies their type.

BADGER (CONT'D)
First, our hero! The kind and noble investment banker, Gideon Bloodgood!

GIDEON BLOODGOOD, a stout, respectable, middle-aged man enters through the door on the top level and strikes a solid, heroic pose. He is dressed as an affluent, conservative businessman.

BADGER (CONT'D)
(to audience)
A typical, hard-working capitalist who would never do anything illegal to enrich himself!
His daughter, Alida...

ALIDA BLOODGOOD, a young woman, enters through the door on the top level, half descend the stairs, and strikes the pose of an optimistic ingenue. She is wearing the artsy, faux working class ensemble of a rebellious rich girl who fetishizes "The People."

BADGER (CONT'D)
(to audience)
A spoiled rich girl looking for political excitement! Would that she knew the tragedy that awaits her! Lucy Fairweather...

LUCY FAIRWEATHER, a soldier, enters on the middle level, and freezes at attention, saluting. She is wearing a dress uniform.

BADGER (CONT'D)
(to audience)
A hero who believes in the Free Market, but who may become a pawn for the very Communism her father fought against! Mrs. Fairweather, Lucy's mother...

MRS. FAIRWEATHER, a mousy middle-aged woman, enters on the lowest level. She wears the faded dress of the fallen middle-class, and strikes a pose of tragic desperation.

BADGER (CONT'D)
(to audience)
A poor widow caught in the trap of the Welfare State! Will she be rescued, or will she be seduced by the siren song of Socialism?

And myself, your narrator: Jack Badger! But what's this? One more character in our melodrama whom I hesitate to introduce! Men, hold your ladies, women, hold your children, and the rest of you - hold yourselves! For here is that Scourge of Capitalism, that Occupier of Wall Street, the Red Death of the One Per Cent; our villain, Damian Landless!

All on stage cringe as DAMIAN LANDLESS, with a evil swirl of his hoodie/cape, sweeps on. He glares, grinning at the audience. BADGER encourages the audience to boo and hiss LANDLESS.

BADGER (CONT'D)
Boo! Boo!

With flourish of his cape/hoodie LANDLESS unleashes a villainous laugh and exits, followed by all but BADGER.

BADGER (CONT'D)
(to audience)
These are our players! Now, dear audience, for your entertainment, for your amusement...For The Greater Good!

ACT I

BADGER

(fanfare) The first act in our story takes place in the past, so I want you to cast your minds back, backÉ back - no, further back - to a simpler, happier, time. The year... is 1987! The president is a movie star! Gas is cheap, cars are big, and the rich are generously trickling down on all of us! It is Morning in America!

A CHORUS of very " '80's" types enter.

Song: "EVEN BETTER THAN ALRIGHT"

BADGER (CONT'D)

CLEAR BLUE SKY,

NOT A CLOUD IN SIGHT.

IT'S 1987,

AND EVERYTHING IS EVEN BETTER THAN ALRIGHT!

CHORUS MEMBER

I'M HEADING OFF TO WORK,

I'M MOVING TO THE SOUND,

WE'RE BUILDING OUR DREAMS,

AND THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH,

MORE THAN ENOUGH TO GO AROUND!

CHORUS

REAGAN'S IN THE WHITE HOUSE,

AND WE'VE GOT WALL STREET ON OUR SIDE.

EVERYBODY'S GETTING RICH,

SO JUST SIT BACK, ENJOY THE RIDE!

All freeze as BLOODGOOD enters on the topmost platform, pulls out a newspaper, sits in chair.

BLOODGOOD
(read from paper)
October 14th 1987: Dow Jones Industrials down 95 points... but experts say it's just a natural fluctuation. There's nothing to worry about!

CHORUS MEMBER

GO USA!

WE'RE NUMBER ONE!

WE'RE STANDING PROUD,

AND THE GOLDEN AGE _

THE GOLDEN AGE HAS JUST BEGUN!

TAXES ARE LOW,

THE MARKET'S FREE,

THE WEALTH TRICKLES DOWN _

JUST THE WAY LIFE'S SUPPOSED TO BE!

All freeze as BLOODGOOD reads from paper again.

BLOODGOOD
October 16th: Dow Jones down 108 points... but stock brokers say everything is fine! In fact, it's the perfect time to buy!

CHORUS

NOTHING'S GONNA HOLD US BACK,

AND NOTHING'S GONNA STAND IN OUR WAY.

LIFE IS FRICKIN' AWESOME,

AND IT'S TOTALLY GETTING BETTER, EVERY DAY!

All freeze as BLOODGOOD reads paper again.

BLOODGOOD
Monday, October 19th... Dow Jones down 500 points? (screams) Aaaahhhhh!

BLOODGOOD strikes pose of a man suffering utmost tragic injustice.

BADGER
Biggest crash since the Great Depression!

CHORUS all panic, scream and exit.

BADGER (CONT'D)
All around the world people panicked, and looked for someone to blame. Some pointed to insider trading, wild speculation, a failure of Capitalism, while others said it was all a Soviet plot to destroy investor confidence! But in his home that titan of Wall Street Gideon Bloodgood had his own theories.

BADGER exits as BLOODGOOD release his tragic pose.

BLOODGOOD
(melodramatically)
Damn you, regulatory government! They strangle competition, punish the successful, but when it all goes to hell they blame us! Oh cruel, cruel fate, that puts those of us with the talent and strength of character to succeed in the power of bureaucrats, politicians, and the will of the people! Don't they know that without us they would have nothing?

Song: "THE GREATER GOOD"

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
(heroically)

THIS NATION WAS BUILT ON THE BACKS

OF THE RICHEST,

AND GREATEST AND WISEST OF MEN,

WITH A FEW WOMEN SCATTERED HERE AND THERE

BUT NOBODY EVER REALLY TALKS MUCH

ABOUT THEM!

HERE'S TO THE NOBLE PIONEERS

WHO BOLDLY PAVED THE WAY,

WE SEE THE BIG PICTURE,

AND BRAVELY SEIZE THE DAY!

WE MAKE THE DECISIONS

THAT MAKE THE WORLD RUN,

WE SPEND THE MONEY THAT

GETS THE JOB DONE.

WE SLEEP SOUNDLY AT NIGHT,

KNOWING FULL WELL WE HAVE DONE
ALL WE COULD,
SHINING A LIGHT –
FIGHTING THE FIGHT –
DEFENDING THE GREATER GOOD!

WE ARE THE DENIZENS OF DARING,
DIGNITY, AND DETERMINATION,
PURVEYORS OF PROGRESS,
INVESTORS IN INNOVATION.

MOST NEVER UNDERSTAND
THE SACRIFICES WE MAKE,
THE RISKS WE MUST TAKE –
WHEN SO MUCH IS AT STAKE!

YET WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG
WE'RE THE FIRST ONES THEY BLAME –
THEY HATE ON THE PLAYER,
BUT THEY GAIN FROM THE GAME!

I SLEEP SOUNDLY AT NIGHT
THOUGH MY MOTIVES MAY BE MISUNDERSTOOD
THAT'S THE PRICE A MAN PAYS,
FOR SHINING A LIGHT –
FIGHTING THE FIGHT –
DEFENDING THE GREATER GOOD!

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
But now, I am ruined! Just because I sometimes invested my customer's money without their knowledge, or approval! And nowÉ now that the Market has crashed, and I've lost two million of their dollars, they will say it was a crime!

Enter CLARENCE, an older, tuxedoed butler.

CLARENCE
Mr. Bloodgood, there's someone here to see you.

BlOODGOOD
So quickly the red jackals begin to feed!

CLARENCE
Sir?

BLOODGOOD
It's big government at the door, Clarence!

CLARENCE
(frightened)
Ahhhh!

BLOODGOOD
Hounding the hard-working businessman with their freedom killing laws! Banks inspectors!

Dramatic music!

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
Regulators!

Dramatic music!

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
Auditors!

Dramatic music!

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
Here to confiscate everything I've worked for and give it all to the lazy and unemployable!

CLARENCE
Excuse me, Mr. Bloodgood, sir, but that sounds like... socialism!

BADGER bursts in.

BADGER
It... is!

BLOODGOOD AND CLARENCE
Who are you?

BADGER
It is I, Jack Badger - Corporate Accountant!
(aside, to audience)
I didn't tell you - I'm also *in* the story!

BLOODGOOD
Don't you work for me?

BADGER
Yes, yes I do...

BLOODGOOD
What are you doing here?

BADGER
I just wanted to be here when... the police arrive!

BLOODGOOD
The Police?

CLARENCE dramatically screams.

BADGER
They should be here any minute!

BLOODGOOD
Dear God! Clarence, lock the door!

CLARENCE dramatically screams, leaves.

BADGER
I've been looking through the books, and it appears you have two million dollars worth of junk bonds that are now just plain junk!

BLOODGOOD
(taken aback)
Gasp!

(Note: When the script says "Gasp!" This is spoken as the word "gasp.")

BADGER
All bought with your investors money!

BLOODGOOD
(heroically)
But I did it for the Greater Good!

BADGER
It's still illegal!

CLARENCE enters.

CLARENCE
Mr. Bloodgood, there's someone else at the door!

CLARENCE looks at BADGER, screams, and exits.

BloODGOOD
First Ivan Boesky, now Gideon Bloodgood! Who's next. Michael Milken? When will this persecution end?

BADGER
Don't you mean prosecution?

BLOODGOOD
How dare you! I, sir, am An Investment Banker! I would never break the law to enrich myself!

BADGER
I have evidence to the contrary!

BLOODGOOD
What do you want?

BADGER
Money! To keep my mouth shut!

BLOODGOOD
Blackmail! You villain!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
(off)
Let me in! I must see him!

CAPTAIN FAIRWEATHER, enters. He is carrying a briefcase.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)
Gideon Bloodgood, my name is Algood Fairweather, and I want to -

BlOODGOOD
It's not my fault!

BADGER
I have evidence!

BLOODGOOD struggles to silence BADGER, who is offering his evidence to clear himself.

BLOODGOOD
Don't listen to -

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Invest some money!

Pause.

BADGER AND BLOODGOOD
What?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
I'd like to invest some money.

BlOODGOOD
Who are you?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Captain Algood Fairweather.

BLOODGOOD
A soldier! I salute your service. Badger...
(Saluting, elbows BADGER.)

BADGER
(saluting)
Yeah, whatever...

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Thank you, gentlemen. I've been in the military a long time, fighting Communism, and defending The Free Market!

Heroic Fanfare as all three strike heroic pose, look into distance.

ALL THREE
The Free Market!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Vietnam. Then El Salvador. Then Lebanon, Zaire, Nicaragua-

BLOODGOOD
A patriot -

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
El Salvador, Lebanon again -

BLOODGOOD
A hero!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Grenada, El Salvador again -

BADGER
We get the point!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
And thanks to the economic policies of President Ronald Reagan-

All salute.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)
I've got a tidy nest egg.

BLOODGOOD
Of course you have!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
But now, with Wall Street crashing I need a safe place for my money, and I thought there is no safer place than the investment Bank of Bloodgood!

BLOODGOOD
I appreciate your trust but -

BLOODGOOD and BADGER begin to hustle FAIRWEATHER up the stairs and out of the door.

BaDGER
But it is after business hours -

BLOODGOOD
So perhaps you could wait until tomorrow to drop off your -

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Two point five million dollars.

BLOODGOOD
Two point five -

FAIRWEATHER opens the briefcase, revealing stacks of bills.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Million dollars.

BLOODGOOD
But then again... why wait? The Bank of Bloodgood is always open to our unthanked heroes!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Oh, sir, in the heat of battle it will do my heart good to know my money will be safe for my family!

BaDGER
Your family?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER, a vision, enters USL with swaddled baby, crosses DSR. Tableau.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Mrs. Fairweather, and my little girl.

BLOODGOOD
Ah family. I, too, have a wife and daughter.

MRS. BLOODGOOD, also a vision, enters USR, also holding a swaddled baby, crosses DSL. Tableau.

Keiko Shimosato-Carriero as MRS FAIRWEATHER, Velina Brown as CAPT. FAIRWEATHER,
Ed Holmes as BLOODGOOD, Victor Toman as BADGER, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MRS BLOODGOOD

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Family! They are the most important thing.

BADGER
(aside, to audience)
I don't have kids, in case you were wondering.

BLOODGOOD
What's her name - your daughter?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Lucy.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(to baby)
Lucy!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
And your girl?

BlOODGOOD
Alida.

MRS. BLOODGOOD
(to baby)
Alida!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
What a beautiful name. What does it mean?

BLOODGOOD
No idea. My lawyer picked it out.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
And the wife -

BLOODGOOD
Something foreign, with an "m" and some vowels.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
The wife and daughter will be provided for in case I... never see them again...

Both wives leave from where they entered.

BLOODGOOD
Captain?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Every soldier knows that somewhere there's a bullet with his name on it.

BADGER
That must be inconvenient.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
It's the price we pay for defending our way of life! But in my case there is more.

BLOODGOOD
More?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Yes. It showed up in my last physical -

BADGER
What?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
It turns out I also have a bad - ACK!

FAIRWEATHER grabs his chest and dies. Pause.

BADGER
A bad what?

Pause.

BLOODGOOD
Captain Fairweather! Are you alright?

Pause.

BADGER
Don't think he's alright.

BLOODGOOD
Clarence!

CLARENCE enters.

ClARENCE
Sir?

BLOODGOOD
We've had a tragedy!

CLARENCE sees the dead FAIRWEATHER, screams.

CLARENCE
Did you try to revive him?

BADGER
Revive him?!
(Aside)
{With all that money?}

CLARENCE hits FAIRWEATHER in the chest. FAIRWEATHER revives.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

A bad heart!

BLOODGOOD

Good god, man! Are you alright?

CLARENCE exits.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

I think it was something from... the war!

BADGER

Which one?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

Or perhaps my heart just can't take the thought of my daughter growing up in an America of Big Government, of Welfare state oppression, and of tax and spend - ACK!

Having worked himself up, FAIRWEATHER dies again.

BLOODGOOD

Clarence!

CLARENCE enters, hits FAIRWEATHER in the heart again. FAIRWEATHER revives.

CaPT. FAIRWEATHER

Liberals! Now, sirs, I must leave. Tomorrow I ship out to fight for The Free Market!

Heroic fanfare!

ALL THREE

The Free Market!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

Here is the money, good Banker Bloodgood -

Hands BLOODGOOD the briefcase.

BLOODGOOD

And here is your receipt, Captain Fairweather.

Hands FAIRWEATHER receipt as BADGER hustles FAIRWEATHER out the door.

BADGER

Well, listen, I don't want to hurry you, but we have a lot of work to do. No good you being out there defending Free Enterprise if we're not here freely enterprising!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

Goodbye, Mr. Bloodgood, and I hope -

BADGER slams door in FAIRWEATHER'S face.

BADGER
Well, things are looking up. Two million little green soldiers, here to rescue you.

BLOODGOOD
Two point five million.

BADGER
Two. Point five of that army is going to be stationed right here (pats his pocket), in Fort Badger. If you don't want word to get out about your theft!

BLOODGOOD
I told you, I did it for the Greater -

FAIRWEATHER bursts in.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Bloodgood! My money! I must have it back!

BADGER
WHY!?! I mean - oh, really?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
My wife -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER, still a vision, appears with baby. Tableau.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)
When I told her I'd invested the money with you she said -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
"Algood Fairweather, you should deposit that money in... a credit Union!"

BlOODGOOD
Egad! Is the woman insane?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER exits.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
So for my wife's sake I must ask you to return my - ACK!

Worked up again,FAIRWEATHER dies. Pause.

BADGER
(matter-of-factly)
On the other hand, if you give it back you will be ruined.

BlOODGOOD
That's true...

BADGER
(looking at FAIRWEATHER'S body)
Do you have any of those large garbage bags?

BLOODGOOD
(heroic)
No... Badger, no! I Am An Investment Banker, and must do the right thing!

BLOODGOOD raises his hand to hit FAIRWEATHER on the chest.

BADGER
BUT!

BLOODGOOD stops before hitting.

BADGER (CONT'D)
What about your own wife, and child?

MRS. BLOODGOOD, also still a vision, enters. Tableau.

BLOODGOOD
(wistfully)
Alida... and whats-her-name...

BADGER
With you in jail our government regulators would take everything from them! They'd be left destitute!

BLOODGOOD
No!

BADGER
Starving!

BLOODGOOD
No!

BADGER
Nothing between them and the poorhouse but your secret Swiss bank account!

BLOODGOOD
But... no!

MRS. BLOODGOOD exits.

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
I, sir, Am An Honest Capitalist! And I cannot take this man's -

Gesturing to FAIRWEATHER BLOODGOOD accidentally hits FAIRWEATHER on the chest, reviving him.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Money!

BLOODGOOD
Here, sir - here is your money! For I would never do anything to shake your confidence in Wall Street!

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Thank you, sir. And might I say - Oh no!

BLOODGOOD
What is it?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
(as if it's the last thing in the world that could happen)
It's... it's my heart!

BADGER
You're not exactly a commercial for military fitness.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
All this excitement...

BloODGOOD
Take it easy, man...

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Oh, my dear family -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER, still, well, you know, a vision, appears, with baby.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)
(looking at the vision of his family)
Am I to never see you again? To never see my Lucy grow up?

BADGER
Not at this rate.

BlOODGOOD
Oh, brave soldier, fear not! We'll fetch a doctor -

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
No... it is too late! My heart... has... failed! Just promise me this...

BlOODGOOD
What?

FAIRWEATHER is fading fast., struggling to speak

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
My money... make sure... make sure that you... that you... give it to...

BADGER
(a suggestion)
To Badger?

FAIRWEATHER is fading faster.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER
Make sure all my money goes... to... to... to...

BADGER
(hopefully)

Me?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

To... to...

FAIRWEATHER is dramatically gasping his last

BLOODGOOD

To?

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

To...to...ahhhhhhhhhhhh....

FAIRWEATHER dies.

BLOODGOOD
(sadly)

He... he is dead.

BADGER

You sure?

BLOODGOOD hits FAIRWEATHER on the chest a few times, no result.

BLOODGOOD

Yes.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER wails and exits..

BADGER

I'll take a check.

BLOODGOOD

Blackmail? Villain! I am an honest Banker, and must honor this soldier's dying wish!

BADGER

Damn!

BLOODGOOD

His wish that this money should go to... Me!

BADGER

What?

BLOODGOOD

It's what he wanted!

BADGER

He wanted to save his wife and daughter.

BLOODGOOD
And by saving myself I will be saving my bank, and by saving my bank this money will be saving the Free Market! And then everyone, even his wife and child, will be saved!

BADGER
(impressed)
Oh, you're good.

BLOODGOOD
It's what he fought for! And I'm sure Mrs. Fairweather would agree that the Market must survive! So, for his sake... for their sake, for the greater good - I'll use his money to restore my investors confidence, balance my books, and cheat the Big Government regulators who would destroy... America!

BLOODGOOD heroically exits.

BADGER
(to audience)
And with my .5 million I'll tour the world! Goodbye accounting department, hello South Seas!

BADGER goes to the body of the CAPTAIN, and takes the receipt for deposit from the dead man's hand.

BADGER (CONT'D)
And I think I'll take this receipt! You can never tell when such a thing might come in handy...

BADGER exits. After a moment he re-enters to triumphant, dramatic music. BADGER indicates CAPT. FAIRWEATHER, who stands, and the two take a dramatic bow to the audience. FAIRWEATHER leaves.

BADGER (CONT'D)
So Banker Bloodgood used the departed captain's money for that most noble of causes - to secure his bank! And aren't we all fortunate he did, for where would we be without men like Gideon Bloodgood?

BLOODGOOD enters on top platform, strikes heroic pose.

BADGER (CONT'D)
If it weren't for these heroic men, Capitalists willing to sacrifice others for the good of the Market, we would all be living on some filthy commune in the Redwoods, driving biodiesel Volkswagens!

BLOODGOOD does leading actor diva bow, exits.

BADGER (CONT'D)
But, dear friends, I am sorry to say that villainy must creep into our story, just as it has crept back into America! For now it is twenty-five years later-

A banner is brought on by two hoodie clad OCCUPIERS. The banner reads: "Twenty Five Years Later."

BADGER (CONT'D)
And despite the unparalleled success of Wall Street, evil is once again on the rise!

BADGER exits.

ACT II

AN OCCUPY WALL ST. ENCAMPMENT

The banner is reversed,, and on the other side is scrawled the word: OCCUPY! The banner is hung upstage.

Suddenly the flap of the cardboard flips open, and DAMIAN LANDLESS enters from the box! With each sweep of his hoodie cape, each serpentine gesture, each rolling laugh he oozes villainy (despite what he is saying. Irony!)

LANDLESS
(to audience)
Today's General Assembly at Occupy is hereby in session! Well... look at all of you... the assemblies aren't usually this well attended. Sometimes it's just the cops and agent provocateurs. But thank you all for coming! Who am I? Oh, I'm just a humble member of the masses here to say you're all in the right place...

Song: "THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU HERE (OCCUPY)".

LANDLESS (CONT'D)

DO YOU FEEL STEPPED OVER AND PUSHED ASIDE?

ARE YOU LOSING ALL HOPE AND

RUNNING LOW ON PRIDE?

HAVE YOU BEEN LEFT OUT AND BEEN LEFT BEHIND?

ARE YOU TIRED OF PRETENDING LIKE

YOU DON'T EVEN MIND?

IF YOU'VE GOT A PART TIME JOB

AND JUST BARELY MAKE RENT

IF YOU'RE GETTING BY ON CREDIT

WHEN YOUR MONEY'S BEEN SPENT

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF WONDERING

WHERE YOUR FUTURE WENT

IT'S TIME YOU REALIZED YOU'RE IN THE 99%

LANDLESS AND CHORUS

THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU HERE –

(OCCUPY OCCUPY)

SPACE FOR YOU HERE –

(OCCUPY OCCUPY)

FIRST OCCUPIER

IF YOU'VE WATCHED ELECTION COVERAGE

ON THE EVENING NEWS,

THEN YOU KNOW WHOEVER WINS

YOU'RE STILL GONNA LOSE.

SECOND OCCUPIER

IF IT SEEMS YOU'RE SCREWED

NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOU CHOOSE,

COME DOWN TOWN WE'VE GOT

A BETTER WAY FOR YOU!

THIRD OCCUPIER

THE LIBERTY BELL SEEMS LATELY

TO BE RINGING RATHER HOLLOW,

FOURTH OCCUPIER

THE TASTE OF AMERICAN PIE

SEEMS A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW,

LANDLESS

STEP OUT FROM THE SHADOWS,

CAST AWAY YOUR SORROW,

START YOUR NEW LIFE IN THE

FIGHT FOR TOMORROW!

LANDLESS AND CHORUS

THERE'S A HOME FOR YOU HERE –

(OCCUPY OCCUPY)

HOPE FOR YOU HERE –

(OCCUPY OCCUPY)

LANDLESS

COME OUT INTO THE STREETS

ALL YOU SOCIALISTS,

ALL YOU COMMUNISTS,

AND ANARCHISTS,

YOU PACIFISTS ,

EVEN SATANISTS –

ESPECIALLY THE FOLKS

WHO ARE JUST PLAIN PISSED!

LANDLESS AND CHORUS

COME ON YOU VAGRANTS

AND CAST OFF SCUM,

YOU HERMITS AND HOBOS

AND BEGGARS AND BUMS,

CRAWL OUT FROM THE WOODWORK

STEP OUT FROM THE SLUMS,

RAISE UP A FIST,

STOP SETTLING FOR CRUMBS!

RAISE UP A FIST,

STOP SETTLING FOR CRUMBS!!!!

Reggie D. White as LANDLESS, The Cast as CHORUS Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

LANDLESS
(to CHORUS and audience)
People! Comrades! It seems we have consensus!

CHORUS
Yay!

LANDLESS
The meeting is adjourned!

The CHORUS, cheering, leaves and LANDLESS, a picture of rabble-rousing confidence collapses into a pile of impotent villainy once they are gone.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Oooooh! Not enough! Not enough people! Capitalism is collapsing all over the world! Greece, France, Iceland, Oakland! But every day this camp gets smaller! And encampments across the country - abandoned! What will happen to our sinister plot of economic justice? Where will we find an audience that will listen to our diabolical message of empowered citizens? To agree with our evil plan to replace corporate dictatorship with what's best for the people? Do any of you (to audience) know where I could find such an audience?

Audience says "Here!"

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Well, it seems I have a few fellow villains in the crowd! (Evil laugh) But if we are going to undermine the one per cent we have to find a way to make Americans believe that our real enemies aren't other nations, or religions, or each other, but those who profit while we fight among ourselves, and that our only hope is for all of us to occupy... the nation!! (Evil laugh) Shhhh! Someone's coming!

LANDLESS hides as an older couple, MR. and MRS. PUFFY, enter. They are dressed in the well-worn clothes of the long-suffering working class, and are both carrying homemade OWS protest signs. They are footsore, and tiredly chanting slogans- "Down with the 1%!" and "Hey Hey, Ho Ho - Capitalism sucks!" with their markedly Upper Midwest/Wisconsin accents – until, with deep sighs–

MRS. PUFFY
How are you holding up, Mr. Puffy?

MR. PUFFY
Alright, I guess Mrs. Puffy.

Both PUFFYs lower their signs with the exhaustion of several days of middle-aged protesting.

MR. PUFFY (CONT'D)
Power to the this, death to the that - seems like a lot of trouble. And I don't see how this is gonna stop the foreclosure –

MRS. PUFFY
Don't worry, Mr. Puffy. We'll find work to pay it off.

MR. PUFFY
Where? The factor closed! After 30 years in the munitions plant - making weapons to keep America safe, and what did we get?

MRS. PUFFY
Well, they couldn't pack us up and take us with them to Uzbekistan.

MR. PUFFY
Maybe we shoulda kicked the union out and taken the pay cuts and reduced benefits they offered! Now all we do is complain.

Reggie D. White as LANDLESS, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MRS. PUFFY, Victor Toman as MR PUFFY
Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

MRS. PUFFY
Still, if it makes the world a better place -

MR. PUFFY
You think it will?

Seeing their hesitation LANDLESS slyly swoops in.

LANDLESS
(seductively)
Of course it will! And soon We, the People, will build a new country... where there are no bosses... and everything's free!

THE PUFFYS
(hopeful)
Free?

LANDLESS
That's right! Free housing, free colleges, free health care! All for the people and all paid for with taxes!

THE PUFFYS
(taken aback)
Taxes?

LANDLESS
Not your taxes! Taxes on the rich! Taxes on corporations! All we have to do is raise their taxes and we can have everything we want!

THE PUFFYS
(once again under his spell)
Oooooohh...

LANDLESS
Now back to the picket line!

The PUFFYS begin to leave.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Wait!

The PUFFYs pause, look back at LANDLESS.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
(dramatically)
Who's street!

ThE PUFFYS
(tired)
Our streets..

LANDLESS
Now Go!

The PUFFY'S exit, tiredly chanting their slogans. LANDLESS revels in his power, but can see that it is not enough.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Our streets... *(shaking his villainous fist at the heavens)* Damn!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER, worn, in a faded dress and clean but tattered apron, and 25 years older than she was as a "vision" enters, carrying a sheet of cookies. Despite her desperate situation she still puts on a brave, cheerful face.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(to LANDLESS)
Who wants a cookie?

LANDLESS
This isn't time for cookies, Mrs. Fairweather!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
It's always time for cookies!

LANDLESS grudgingly takes a cookie and eats it.

LANDLESS
This is the last Occupy Camp, Mrs. Fairweather! And if we don't do something it, too, will disappear! We need a plan if the movement is going to survive! We need some way to show every unemployed man and woman, every student drowning in debt, every downsized, rightsized, outsourced American that the real problem with Capitalism is... Capitalism itself!

Dramatic music!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Goodness! It sounds like you're talking... revolution!

LANDLESS
I... am! The people don't know it yet, but real revolution is the only Hope to change the country! (to audience) See how I did that? Hope and Change and revolution?

TABLEAU

With a heroic flourish BLOODGOOD enters on the upper platform. He, too, is 25 years older, but clearly they have prosperous years.

BLOODGOOD
How the time flies. It seems like only a few moments ago that I stood in this very spot, looking out over a desperate nation, and watching that most pathetic yet dangerous tool of disorder - elected government - almost let Wall Street collapse!

TABLEAU

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
But I thought you were just trying to end corruption on Wall Street!

LANDLESS
It's all corruption, Mrs. Fairweather! Capitalism is corruption! Cookie!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER gives him another cookie.

TABLEAU

BlOODGOOD
And these last few years have been particularly difficult... Marches, occupations, elections! If Dick Cheney weren't undead this would kill him! But finally, with a solid conservative majority on the Supreme Court, America is more profitable nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all those at the top! We are Citizen's United! Power to the Patricians!

TABLEAU

LANDLESS
What we need now is a poster child for the movement...

Mrs. FAIRWEATHER
Poster child?

LANDLESS
Occupy may not need a leader, but if we had a face, someone the people could identify with...

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
What about you?

LANDLESS
(indicating audience)
These people will never listen to a man who lives in a box! To them I'm just another unemployed drama teacher!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
And you'd still have a job if you weren't so stubborn.

LANDLESS
(bitterly)
They de-funded the department!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
They wouldn't have if you'd directed their stage version of Atlas Shrugged!

LANDLESS
It was ten hours of Capitalist propaganda!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
It's a classic!

TABLEAU

BlOODGOOD
But I'm an old man, and all the money in the world can't keep me alive forever - at least, not yet. I cannot fight forever. Even I...I must, someday, lay down my sword and go to that distant shore that awaits us all... the Cayman Islands. But who, who shall fight the good fight when I am gone? Who can we, the oppressed overclass, ever trust to keep lit the lighthouse of financial freedom against the hurricane of common people? Who can we trust? Who? Ah! I have just the person!

TABLEAU

LANDLESS
I have just the person!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Who?

LANDLESS
(with a dramatic, evil flourish)
Your daughter, Lucy!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(stunned)
Lucy?

LANDLESS
(an even bigger dramatic, evil flourish)
Lucy!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(still stunned)
My daughter, Lucy?

LANDLESS
(feeling that his dramatic evil flourishes are undermined if he has to explain himself)
Yes, Lucy! Who joined the army -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Right after 9/11 -

LANDLESS
And who's coming back from her tour of duty in Afghanistan today!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Gasp!

TABLEAU

BLOODGOOD
Alida! My daughter, coming home today after years of studying Europe! Who better to give voice to the downtrodden corporations than the heir to the

Bloodgood fortune? I only wish her mother - M something-or-other - could have lived to see it!

TABLEAU

LANDLESS
She's just the sort of person we need if we are going to show America what a failure capitalism is: a patriotic veteran fights overseas, while back home her mother becomes a pathetic, pitiful, miserable, destitute, downtrodden wretch!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER is aghast at this true vision of herself.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Aaaah! She mustn't see me like this! In rags! Homeless! After Algood died and all his money, disappeared -

BADGER races on stage.

BADGER
(to audience)
The Captain's body had been found... abandoned! In a J.C. Penny's downtown! And all his money had disappeared! It was.... a mystery!

BADGER races off.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
We lost the house. But I never thought I'd end up on the street! Betrayed by the very system Algood fought to save! Ah, well, at least I know my Lucy will never find me here, and see my shame!

TABLEAU

LUCY and ALIDA enter, tableau. LUCY, entering on the ground floor, is smartly dressed as a clean-cut soldier. ALIDA, entering on the upper deck, is wearing upscale revolutionary chic.

LUCY
(to MRS. FAIRWEATHER)
Mother!

ALIDA
(to BLOODGOOD)
Father!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER AND BLOODGOOD
My daughter!

LUCY sees MRS. FAIRWEATHER'S poverty, is shocked.

LUCY
Why... why didn't you tell me?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
There was nothing you could do, so far away - All I have left now is this robe, these cookies, and my memories. If it wasn't for Damian -

LUCY
Damian?

LANDLESS
(seductively)
Lucy -

MrS. FAIRWEATHER
Damian Landless. He found me, and brought me to the encampment.

LuCY
Thank you, Mr. Landless. You must be a good, kind, decent American!

LANDLESS
(disgusted)
Must I?

TABLEAU

BlOODGOOD
(embracing his daughter)
Alida, my darling!

AliDA
Get your capitalist hooves off me!

BLOODGOOD
Hooves?

ALIDA
You've got the blood of the workers under your fingernails, and I don't want you staining my revolutionary ensemble!

BLOODGOOD
Alida, what are you talking about?

ALIDA
I'm talking about the people, papa! I'm talking about the huddled masses yearning for self-determination, ready to throw off the yoke of the bourgeois aristocracy! Vive la revolution!

BLOODGOOD
(horrified)
Oh my god...

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as MRS FAIRWEATHER, Velina Brown as LUCY FAIRWEATHER, Lisa Hori-Garcia as Alida, Ed Holmes as BLOODGOOD Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

ALIDA
That's right, papa - I've been to France!

TABLEAU

LUCY
Thank you, Mr. Landless, but I can't let my mother live in the street! This is... America!

LANDLESS
(with growing drama)
A lot has changed since you left the country, Lucy. Unemployment! Foreclosures! Homelessness and misery! Corporate politicians prostituting themselves for their Free Market pimps on Wall Street! Everything is falling down around our ears, and we, the people, must strike while passions are high!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER applauds.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
He was a drama teacher!

LUCY
Oh.

LUCY joins applause.

TABLEAU

BlOODGOOD
(horrified)
France!

ALIDA
Where a new socialist government is pushing back against your Empire of Greed! People are in the streets all over the world! You know what they're called?

BLOODGOOD
Street people?

ALIDA
Revolutionaries!

BLOODGOOD
But Alida -

BLOODGOOD puts a hand on ALIDA'S shoulder.

ALIDA
DON'T TOUCH THE JACKET! Christian Dior, 4500 euros.

BLOODGOOD
Sorry. I have such plans for you -

ALIDA

What plans?

BLOODGOOD

Alida, it's time for you to do your part to protect the Free Market!

BLOODGOOD strikes heroic pose. Fanfare.

ALIDA

What?

TABLEAU

LANDLESS

The curtain has dropped on American Capitalism!

LUCY

Gasp!

MrRS FAIRWEATHER

I'm afraid he's right, dear. And I've been abandoned by all your Father believed in! Now the only way I can survive is with... government assistance!

LUCY

(horrified)

No!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Food stamps!

LUCY

No!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Public health!

LUCY

No!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Low cost senior bus passes!

LUCY

How... how did this all happen?

BADGER races on.

BADGER

It's... a mystery!

BADGER races off. LANDLESS begins to stalk LUCY with his explanation.

LANDLESS
You see, Lucy? Each time Capitalism fails it's Socialism that saves us! We just want to cut out the middleman.

LUCY
This sounds like... revolution!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
That's what I said!

LANDLESS
But even a leaderless revolution needs a spokesperson! The Zapatistas had Subcommandante Marcos, and we will have Sargent Lucy!

LUCY
Me?

LANDLESS
The movement needs someone to take center stage!

LUCY
I... I couldn't!

LANDLESS
But I could write you a fabulous monologue -

LUCY
It's... it's... I don't know how to say this... I saw things in the war -

Landless
That's perfect! Lights up, and you tell people how fighting for the American war machine scarred your soul!

TABLEAU

BLOODGOOD
It's your turn to save America from the red hordes!

ALIDA
For years you barely let me outside - unless I was on a pony - and now you want me to save America? Well Papa, now I've been outside without a pony, and outside is a poor, cold place, full of misery and suffering.

BLOODGOOD
Alida -

ALIDA
DON'T TOUCH THE JACKET!

BLOODGOOD
Sorry!

ALIDA turns to go.

BLOODGOOD (CONT'D)
If history has shown us anything it's that Ayn Rand was right! Government of the People, by The People, and for The People can never work with The People in charge! The know deep in their hearts that the management of America should be left to the elite, to the superior minds who understand the country - because we built it!

ALIDA
You're wrong, Papa! And... and so was Ayn Rand!

BLOODGOOD
Blasphemy!

ALIDA
Revolution can work in America! The people, united, will not be defeated! Out of my way, Papa! I'm joining... The Movement!

BLOODGOOD
(taken aback)
The Movement! Gasp!

ALIDA
First I'm going to pack a few bags, maybe a trunk. But papa - I won't be taking my pony!

BLOODGOOD
But what about the Greater Good?

ALIDA
Anything that does not benefit the little people first cannot be good!

BLOODGOOD
Alida!

ALIDA
(striking a defiant pose)
Call me Tanya!

ALIDA exits, followed by BLOODGOOD.

LUCY
But this encampment - this isn't the America I fought for! I fought for the system where Anyone can make it if they work hard and play by the rules!

LANDLESS
Well, that isn't capitalism!

LUCY
You're wrong! Capitalism is good, and pure, and the Average American's best friend! And I'm going to prove it - for all of us!

LUCY crosses to the exit, strikes heroic pose.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Goodbye, mother!

LUCY starts to leave.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Where are you going?

LUCY
I'm going to be an American success!

LUCY exits.

LANDLESS
We've got to get her back! We need a fresh face to inspire the masses!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
But she doesn't want to come back. She's going to be a success!

LANDLESS
We'll see about that, Mrs. Fairweather.

LANDLESS lets loose with an evil laugh, takes cookie, exits.

Mrs. FAIRWEATHER
(to her dead, unseen husband)
Oh, Algood! Our daughter is home! I wish you could see her - all grown up. And she says she wants to rescue me from the shame of government assistance, but is it too late? Could I ever be the self-reliant American I once was?

Song, "MRS. FAIRWEATHER'S LAMENT".

MRS. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)

ALGOOD MY DEAR, IT'S BEEN SO LONG –

WOULD YOU EVEN RECOGNIZE ME?

25 YEARS HAVE COME AND GONE

THEY HAVE NOT TREATED ME KINDLY.

ONCE WE WERE YOUNG AND FULL OF HOPE,

AND OUR LOVE WAS PURE AND STRONG,

THEN- GONE, GONE- YOU WERE GONE,

BUT LIFE FOR ME DRAGGED ON

ALGOOD MY DEAR, DON'T JUDGE ME TOO HARSHLY,

WITH ALL THE HARDSHIP I'VE BEEN THROUGH,

I'VE DONE ALL I COULD TO RAISE OUR DEAR LUCY

SHE'S GROWN UP TO BE SO MUCH LIKE YOU.

BUT I'VE GROWN TO QUESTION

ALL YOU BELIEVED IN,

I WONDER IF YOU UNDERSTOOD –

WHAT KIND OF SYSTEM YOU FOUGHT TO PROTECT

WHEN DEFENDING THE GREATER GOOD?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER finishes, and BADGER enters and leads a round of applause for her. MRS. FAIRWEATHER bows like the grande dame she is. BADGER then takes her hand, and leads MRS. FAIRWEATHER out.

ACT III

IN THE HOME OF GIDEON BLOODGOOD

BLOODGOOD enters.

BLOODGOOD
(tragically brokenhearted)
How could she do this to me? I've pleaded with her all night, but it's no good! God knows I've given her the finest of everything, and now she wants to throw it all away to eat lentil soup with communists! Oh, Alida, where did I go wrong?

Suddenly the door opens, and BADGER enters with a suitcase.

BADGER
Bloodgood!

BLOODGOOD
Badger!

BADGER
(to audience)
I hope this isn't confusing, but I'm in this story a lot!

BLOODGOOD
I thought you were touring the world with your... blackmail money!

BADGER
I've come back for more!

BLOODGOOD
Why would I give you more money?

BADGER
Another 25 years of keeping my mouth shut. Just cut the check and I'll be on my way.

BLOODGOOD
(with self-righteous indignation)
I have no intention of giving you anything!

BADGER
I thought you might say that... which is why I brought... this!

BADGER holds up a piece of paper.

BLOODGOOD
I'm sorry, I can't read that from here.

BADGER brings the paper slowly closer.

BADGER
This!

BLOODGOOD

Closer...

BADGER brings paper closer.

BADGER

This...

BLOODGOOD

Thank you. *(reads)* "Receipt for deposit made out to... Captain Algood Fairweather!" Where did you get that?

BADGER

Never mind where! The point is I can prove you stole captain Fairweather's money!

BLOODGOOD

Stole? Never! It was an investment in the Greater Good!

BADGER

And what about Fairweather's family?

BLOODGOOD

It was a long time ago Badger! I'm afraid they are gone, and impossible to ever, ever find!

CLARENCE enters.

ClARENCE

A Lucy Fairweather to see you, sir.

BLOODGOOD

Gasp!

LUCY enters.

LUCY

Mr. Bloodgood, my name is Lucy Fairweather -

BLOODGOOD

Gasp!

LUCY

And I have come to talk to you about a crime!

BloODGOOD

Gasp!

LUCY

A crime committed by...

BLOODGOOD

The Market made me do it!

BADGER

I have the receipt!

BLOODGOOD

(struggles to block BADGER)

Give me that!

LUCY

MY MOTHER!

BLOODGOOD and BADGER stop, confused.

BLOODGOOD AND BADGER

Who?

LUCY

My mother! She's desperately poor -

BLOODGOOD

(in disbelief)

Poor... in America?

LUCY

And now she's become... an addict!

BADGER AND BLOODGOOD

Gasp!

LUCY

Addicted to the Welfare State!

BLOODGOOD

You poor girl!

LUCY

But if I can just show her it's better to pay her own way, not take government hand-outs, I know she'll be right as rain! So I've come to you - the one man in town who's always looking to give good Americans a chance!

BLOODGOOD

So you've come for a job...

LUCY

I'll work hard, and you'll never regret it!

BLOODGOOD

Your story touches me. It shows honesty, integrity, character. So of course I won't give you a job!

LUCY

What?

BLOODGOOD
If I gave you a job just because you needed one I'd be as bad as our nanny-state government? Is that you want?

LUCY
(chastised)
You're right. If I was worthy of having a job I wouldn't need to get it - I'd already have it. But what will I do? My head... the room is spinning... I feel faint...

Having upset herself, LUCY faints, BADGER catches her.

BADGER
These Fairweather's sure are fragile.

CLARENCE enters.

ClARENCE
A Mister Landless to see you, sir.

CLARENCE exits as LUCY'S head pops up.

LUCY
Mr. Landless?

BLOODGOOD
You know him?

LUCY
He's a socialist! A big government, welfare state, tax and spend -

Having worked herself up again, LUCY faints again. BADGER catches her.

BADGER
I just don't think they're cut out for military service.

BlOODGOOD
Badger! Take Miss Fairweather into the kitchen!

BADGER leaves with the fainted LUCY. LANDLESS enters.

LANDLESS
Where is she, you plutocrat?

BLOODGOOD
I don't know what you're talking about, Mr. Landless.

LANDLESS
So, you've heard of me?

BLOODGOOD
Who hasn't heard of Damian Landless, the Scourge of all that is decent? The Leader of Occupy!

LANDLESS
That's where you're wrong, Bloodgood. (evilly triumphant) Occupy has no leader!

BLOODGOOD
(horrified)
No leader! How unAmerican!

LANDLESS
We are going to bring you down, Rich Man!

BLOODGOOD crosses to door, opens it!

BLOODGOOD
Out of my home, you Bolshevik!

LANDLESS
The days when you could order us around like servants are over!

ALIDA enters unseen with suitcase and purse.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
The people are waking up, and soon all of your ill-gotten gains will be returned to their rightful owners - the 99 per cent!

ALIDA puts down a suitcase and raises a fist.

ALIDA
Power to the people!

LANDLESS
Who are you?

BLOODGOOD
Alida, no!

LANDLESS
Alida...

LANDLESS pushes BLOODGOOD out of door, holds it closed.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as ALIDA, Reggie D White as Landless Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

LANDLESS *(cont'd)*
Alida... Bloodgood? (aside, to audience) Rich girl turned revolutionary? She would be perfectly cast as our champion to undermine the One Per Cent!

ALIDA
Me?

LANDLESS
You heard that?

ALIDA
I'm standing right here.

LANDLESS
Alida Bloodgood, are you ready to play your part in Fighting The Power?

ALIDA
(proudly)
Call me Tanya!

BLOODGOOD re-enters.

BLOODGOOD
You're not going anywhere with my daughter!

LANDLESS
Watch me!

BLOODGOOD shuts door before they can exit. hearing the door close, LUCY enters from the kitchen.

LUCY
He's gone! Banker Bloodgood, I must plead with you one more time for... Mr. Landless! Why have you followed me?

LANDLESS
(to LUCY)
I told you the movement needed a spokesperson. Tanya shall return with me to the encampment from which we will overthrow everything Gideon Bloodgood stands for!

BlOODGOOD
You mean bathing?

LANDLESS
Come Tanya, let's away!

ALIDA
I'm leaving this Mansion of Oppression!

LANDLESS and ALIDA go to the door, but BLOODGOOD steps in their way

ALIDA (CONT'D)
(as a spoiled child, to BLOODGOOD)

Move!

BLOODGOOD moves, and ALIDA continues her dramatic exit with LANDLESS

ALIDA (CONT'D)

Death to the Pigs!

LANDLESS sweeps ALIDA out, as BLoODGOOD follows to the door.

BLOODGOOD

But… Alida!

ALIDA
(offstage)

Tanya!

BADGER enters from the kitchen wearing a bib and eating a chicken leg.

BADGER

Bloodgood!

BLOODGOOD

Badger!

BADGER

Have you made up your mind? No? Then perhaps Miss Fairweather will reward me for the truth.

LUCY

What truth?

BADGER

Years ago, in this very room, something terrible happened. A crime! A dead soldier! 2.5 Million dollars! I never told anyone the true, shocking story of what happened that night!

BLOODGOOD

Badger -

BADGER

Bloodgood if you don't make a deal quick - justice department here I come!

LUCY

Who are you?

BADGER

Jack Badger - Corporate Accountant! I used to work for Gideon Bloodgood, but one night -

LUCY
Wait a minute... are you about to... betray your employer?

BADGER
Unless he pays me off!

LUCY AND BLOODGOOD
Blackmail! You villain!

BADGER
What?

LUCY
It's because of criminals like you, blowing the whistle on the innocent mistakes of their honest employer that people have lost faith in the system!

BADGER
But look at this receipt! It's from Bloodgood!

LUCY
I will not look at your receipt of lies! Lies about this great man! Whatever this receipt is I'm sure you've twisted it for your own whistleblowing, blackmaily purposes!

Relieved and self-righteous, BLOODGOOD opens the door again.

BLOODGOOD
Badger, I think you should go!

BADGER
You've not seen the last of me, Bloodgood! Someone will listen!

BADGER exits, turns back to face bloodgood.
And another thing _

BLOODGOOD slams door in BADGER'S face.

BLOODGOOD
Thank you, my dear, thank you for standing up to that scoundrel. You've given this old man hope.

LUCY
Trusting our business leaders is part of my duty to America, sir. And after your decades of service to the Free Market -

Heroic fanfare as both strike heroic poses.

LUCY (CONT'D)
It's the least I could do.

BLOODGOOD
Well said... and now go, good soldier, go and make your way in this land of boundless possibility!

BLOODGOOD opens door.

LUCY
But sir, what shall you do now? With your daughter gone?

BLOODGOOD
I? I shall muddle along, alone with my billions, knowing that without an heir when I die all that I have built will be taken by a soulless death taxing government! If only there was someone I could pass my wealth and power to. Oh, the injustice!

LUCY
Oh, the injustice!

BLOODGOOD
Farewell, Sargent Fairweather!

LUCY
Farewell, good Banker Bloodgood! I wish I could help you in your search for a worthy heir, but I must find a job of my own. But I am sure someone will appear, some good soul that will help you fight for... the Greater Good!

LUCY exits. BLOODGOOD closes the door.

BLOODGOOD
(Tragically)
Oh cruel, cruel world, that would allow a... a...a... wait a minute!

BLOODGOOD re-opens the door, and races after LUCY.

BlOODGOOD (CONT'D)
Sargent Fairweather! Wait!

BLOODGOOD exits.

ACT IV

THE OCCUPY ENCAMPMENT.

The PUFFYS, more tired than usual, enter from opposite sides of the stage.

THE PUFFYS
(wearily chanting.)
"Hey hey... ho ho.... Capitalism's got to... go...

With big sighs they lower their signs, pull a couple of folding chairs out of an onstage box and sit, exhausted.

MR. PUFFY
(dejectedly)
Well, there's another day of not looking for a job, Mrs. Puffy.

MRS. PUFFY
Can't look for a job while overthrowing the Man, Mr. Puffy!

MR. PUFFY
It just doesn't seem right!

MRS. PUFFY
What?

MR. PUFFY
All this protesting, and complaining! When did protesting ever change anything?

MRS. PUFFY
Ya got me!

MR. PUFFY
Last night... I snuck back into our house while the bank folks weren't looking -

MRS. PUFFY
I thought you were at the drum circle!

MR. PUFFY
I just wanted to sit in our living room like I used to. In front of the tv, ya know? Watch a ball game.

MRS. PUFFY
Oh, I do miss my soap operas!

MR. PUFFY
And I was thinking about all that's going on, the problems of the country, and all the confusing, high-falutin' political talk from Mr. Landless and the rest of these activists -

MRS. PUFFY
Capitalism, socialism, what-everism! Makes my head spin!

MR. PUFFY
And suddenly there it was! Right in front of me! After the game!

MRS. PUFFY
What?

MR. PUFFY checks to see if the coast is clear, then-

MR. PUFFY
FOX News!

MRS. PUFFY
Oh goodness! Don't let Mr. Landless hear you! He'll kick you out of the Masses!

MR. PUFFY
And they had some pretty straight forward explanations for all of this! No fancy words, or conspiracy theories! Just straightforward, American sentences with lots of short words! Like "Don't tax the rich, they make jobs!" See? Seven words, seven syllables!

MRS. PUFFY
It's a relief to hear something with no "ocracies" or "isms."

MR. PUFFY
Yeah! And "Folks at the top earned it!"

MRS. PUFFY
Only six words!

MR. PUFFY
Maybe our mistake is we've been listening to folks that are too smart, and not taking responsibility for ourselves!

Song: "GET WHAT WE DESERVE"

MR. PUFFY (CONT'D)

WE'VE BEEN BLAMING RICH FOLKS

FOR OUR TROUBLES, AND LOOK AT WHERE IT'S LED -

MRS. PUFFY

STILL NO JOBS AND MY BACK'S GONE OUT

FROM HAVING PAVEMENT FOR A BED –

MR. PUFFY

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT TODAY

ABOUT SOMETHING RUSH LIMBAUGH ONCE SAID –

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE PUNISH FOLKS

FOR TRYING TO GET AHEAD?

SOME FOLKS ARE BORN A LITTLE SMARTER

THAN OTHERS,

SOME FOLKS WORK A LITTLE HARDER

THAN OTHERS,

IN THE END MAYBE WE ALL GET WHAT WE DESERVE!

PEOPLE LIKE US AREN'T SUPPOSED

TO UNDERSTAND IT,

WHO ARE WE TO COMPLAIN IF IT'S THE WAY

GOD PLANNED IT?

IN THE END MAYBE WE ALL GET WHAT WE DESERVE!

ALL THE LITTLE CREATURES IN THE JUNGLE KNOW,

THERE'S ALWAYS ONE LION RUNNING THE SHOW.

IF IT WORKS FOR THEM, WHY NOT FOR US?

YOU CAN'T CHANGE MOTHER NATURE

JUST BY RAISING A FUSS!

MR. PUFFY (CONT'D)

Rush said those at the top were just born better and work harder than us at the bottom! Kinda explains things. Who are we to upset the evolutionary applecart?

MRS. PUFFY

HOW CAN WE TRUST WHAT ANYONE'S SAYING?

SEEMS THEY'VE ALL GOT

AN ANGLE THAT THEY'RE PLAYING!

THEY'LL TWIST YOU UP,

AND THROW YOU THROUGH A CURVE

LOST OUR JOBS, NOW WE'RE LEFT WITH NOTHING

DOES THAT MAKE IT WRONG

FOR OTHER FOLKS TO HAVE SOMETHING?

IN THE END DID WE GET WHAT WE DESERVED?

CHARTS AND GRAPHS AND STATISTICAL FACTS

DON'T MAKE MUCH SENSE TO ME,

Victor Toman as MR. PUFFY, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MRS PUFFY Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

MR. PUFFY

MAYBE WE SHOULD LEAVE THE THINKING TO

THOSE CEOS WITH THEIR BUSINESS DEGREES...

MRS. PUFFY

EVERYBODY HERE SEEMS SO OPTIMISTIC,

MR. PUFFY

BUT DOESN'T REVOLUTION

SOUND A BIT UNREALISTIC?

DOES ANYBODY REALLY HAVE THE NERVE?

THE PUFFYS

THIS OBAMA THING DIDN'T

GO LIKE WE EXPECTED

WILL WE BE BETTER NOW THAT TRUMP IS ELECTED?

THEN MAYBE WE'LL GET WHAT WE DESERVE!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER enters, with a big plate of cookies.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Cookies!

The PUFFYS each take a cookie.

MRS. PUFFY

I don't know how you do it, Mrs. Fairweather, but you make this encampment seem almost like home.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Well, it's not easy baking cookies over an open fire at a drum circle, but I do my best. Mrs. Puffy, be a dear and go keep an eye on the other dozen?

MRS. PUFFY

Will, do, Mrs. F!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Make sure those drummers don't sprinkle anything "medicinal" on them.

MRS. PUFFY

Okie dokie.

MRS. PUFFY exits.

MR. PUFFY

Any word from your daughter? Did she get a job?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

All I know is there is going to be some kind of announcement today at Bloodgood Bank, and that my Lucy is going to be part of it!

MR. PUFFY

Lucy is with Bloodgood, and his little girl is here. Not that Alida –

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(shaking a finger, correcting)
Ah – ah – ah...

BOTH
Tanya -

Mr. PUFFY
– Is doing us any good!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
She has gotten us a lot of media attention!

MR. PUFFY
You can't eat media attention! You'd think with that rich girl in the camp she'd at least get us all jobs!

LANDLESS enters. He sees MRS. PUFFY talking to MRS. FAIRWEATHER

LANDLESS
Isn't there a general assembly you two should be at?

MR. PUFFY and MRS. FAIRWEATHER start to leave.

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Wait!

MR. PUFFY and MRS. FAIRWEATHER freeze as LANDLESS crosses menacingly towards them. LANDLESS extends a villainous hands to MRS. FAIRWEATHER

LANDLESS (cont'd)
Cookie!

LANDLESS takes one cookie.

LANDLESS (cont'd)
Now go!

MR. PUFFY and MRS. FAIRWEATHER exit. ALIDA enters, full of adolescent romanticism.

ALIDA
Oh, Damian! This has all been so magical and amazing! The meetings, the tattoos, the hoodies – the people fighting for freedom! When I think of all the years I wasted dancing in ballet class when I could have been marching in the street! This is why I was born! And you, Damian Landless, have shown me my purpose! To be with the masses in Revolution!

LANDLESS
You know the motivations of the Capitalist mind, Tanya! With your knowledge of the one per cent, you could set the stage for real change!

TABLEAU

BLOODGOOD and LUCY enter into BLOODGOOD'S office on the upper platform.. BLOODGOOD addresses the audience as if they were a bank of reporters.

BLOODGOOD

I want to thank you all for coming to this press conference on such short notice. As you all know our country is at a crossroads; down one path we have corruption, decay, envy, and endless suffering, and down the other path we have Capitalism! And it is incumbent upon those of us who will pick the path to make sure the next generation of economic leaders have the same vision, the same dedication to the Free Market that got America where it is today!

TABLEAU

In yet another part of the camp (apart from LANDLESS and ALIDA) MRS. FAIRWEATHER enters, followed by BADGER.

BADGER

Are you Mrs. Captain Fairweather?

Mrs. FAIRWEATHER

(struck with nostalgia)

Mrs. Captain... no one has called me that for 25 years...

BADGER

Twenty-five years ago there was (to audience) ...a mystery! Your husband, Captain Fairweather, died!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

(tragically)

Leaving my daughter and I penniless.

BADGER

(to audience)

Mystery!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

(hopefully)

Have you seen my Lucy?

BADGER

I saw her... in the house of the man who stole your family's money!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Who?

BADGER

The same man who's name appears on this receipt!

With a flourish BADGER pulls out receipt.

TABLEAU

LANDLESS
Comrade Tanya, will you be the bright, shinning red star of our revolution?

TABLEAU

BLOODGOOD
Luckily for America, and for the Greater Good, I have found just such a person! It's not about experience, it's about heart. And so, Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I introduce you to my new heir, and the next head of Bloodgood Enterprises, Bloodgood Industries, Bloodgood Incorporated, Bloodgood International and the next president of the Bank of Bloodgood - Sargent Lucy Fairweather!

LUCY steps forward.

TABLEAU

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(reads)
Gideon Bloodgood! Gasp!

BADGER
He stole your husbands money to save his bank!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Gasp!

TABLEAU

ALIDA
For my comrades... for my country... for the People... yes! Yes, I will!

LANDLESS
(big evil laugh)
Muuuah ha ha ha!

LANDLESS and ALIDA exit.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Were you with my husband when his heart... gave out?

BADGER
Yes. And his last thoughts were of you. Repeatedly. Now come, Mrs. Fairweather, we must plan how to retrieve our... I mean your... money!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(lovingly, to her long-lost husband)
Algood!

BADGER and MRS. FAIRWEATHER exit.

LUCY

Ladies and gentlemen; I... I don't know what to say. I'm honored. Thank you, good Banker Bloodgood, for enlisting me in the struggle to keep the freest of Free Markets free! And I know I'm not alone in that fight. We all want this country to be a better place, don't we? Well better should start with the best, because they deserve it! And if we all work together we can help the downtrodden capitalist and pitiable billionaire! Because when they succeed, we all succeed!

Song: "TAKE BACK AMERICA".

LUCY (CONT'D)

THOUGH OUR BACKS

MAY GROW TIRED AND WEARY,

AND THAT HILL

SEEMS TOO HIGH TO CLIMB,

IT WON'T BE TOO LONG,

IF WE ALL STAND STRONG.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT –

STEP BY STEP –

LITTLE BY LITTLE,

IT'S ONLY JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME HARD WORK,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME PRIDE,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE REACHING DOWN

FOR SOMETHING WE'VE ALL GOT DEEP INSIDE –

IT'S GOING TO TAKE YOU,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME,

TO TAKE BACK AMERICA.

I'M JUST A SIMPLE SOLDIER,

BUT I DO KNOW WHAT I FEEL.

I KNOW WHAT'S IN MY HEART,

AND I'VE SEEN WHAT'S TRULY REAL.

I SEE A NATION THAT'S LOST IT'S WAY,

TEARING APART AT THE SEAMS!

PEOPLE LIVING LIVES WITHOUT HOPE,

GIVING UP ON THEIR DREAMS!

BUT I BELIEVE THAT THERE'S A FUTURE

THAT'S BETTER THAN TODAY,

WE CAN'T LET THAT FUTURE GET AWAY!

BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME HARD WORK,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME PRIDE,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE REACHING DOWN

FOR SOMETHING WE'VE ALL GOT DEEP INSIDE –

IT'S GOING TO TAKE YOU,

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME,

TO TAKE BACK AMERICA.

TAKE BACK AMERICA.

LUCY exits, followed by a beaming and triumphant BLOODGOOD

INTERLUDE

BADGER enters.

BADGER
(to audience)
So, both our Hero and Villain have almost achieved their goals: honest Banker Bloodgood has an heir that understands his all-American message - what's best for the Best must be best for the rest! Meanwhile, activist villain Landless continues to seduce the disgruntled with the kind of insane visions and twisted socialist fantasies that only children believe in! An empowered Working Class! Corporate criminals in chains and economic justice for all! I hope I'm not shocking you with these dangerous ideas. But this story of the valiant Capitalist and traitorous Progressive is the one told everyday in newspapers and on televisions across the country. (indicating stage) This! Is what most of America sees! But sometimes even I forget how upsetting these ideas can be. Forgive me.

BADGER exits.

Velina Brown as LUCY FAIRWEATHER, Ed Holmes as BLOODGOOD
Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

ACT V

SCENE 1

BLOODGOOD and LUCY enter.

BLOODGOOD
Well, you're on your way, Miss Fairweather – on your way to a bright future in the private sector!

LUCY
(honored)
You really think I have what it takes, Mr. Bloodgood?

BLOODGOOD
Don't let your humble origins dissuade you, sergeant! Look at me! Born with none of your affirmative action advantages! White, male, both parents and plenty of money - But did I let that get me down?

LUCY
No!

BLOODGOOD
Because I knew that what's best for America is -

LUCY
To let the best rule America!

BLOODGOOD
Now come on, you have another meeting!

Both are filled with patriotic excitement as BLOODGOOD begins to lead LUCY out.

LUCY
Where?

BLOODGOOD
We must meet with the Mayor at Civic Center.

LUCY stops.

LUCY
Civic Center? But, that's where... the last Occupy camp is!

BLOODGOOD
Yes?

LUCY
But...

BLOODGOOD
What is it?

LUCY
(dramatically ashamed)
But... my mother is in that camp!

BLOODGOOD
WHAT?

LUCY
My mother!

BLOODGOOD is taken aback.

BLOODGOOD
The Widow Fairweather... is in that camp?

LUCY
Yes -

BLOODGOOD
Gasp!

LUCY
She gave up on Capitalism, and now is under Occupy's socialist spell!

BLOODGOOD
(thinking quickly)
Lucy, now that I think about it, maybe you should -

LUCY
(suddenly filled with heroic verve)
You're right! I should rescue her!

BLOODGOOD
I was going to say perhaps we shouldn't-

LUCY
We shouldn't give up on her! This is my chance to free her!

BLOODGOOD
I think we should -

LUCY
We should leave right now! Thank you, Banker Bloodgood. I couldn't do this without you!

LUCY exits.

BLOODGOOD
(tormented)
Oh, ghosts of the past! How long will you haunt me?

LUCY pokes her head in.

LUCY

Are you coming?

BLOODGOOD

Oh. Yes.

LUCY and BLOODGOOD exit.

ACT V

SCENE 2

In the Occupy Camp. ALIDA and LANDLESS enter from within the cardboard box.

LANDLESS

Tanya - the stage is yours!

ALIDA turns to crowd.

ALIDA

(to audience. Demure, yet earnestly)

Comrades! I am here before you to say that the time for talk is over! Wait! I going to keep talking for a minute, okay? You've worked hard all your lives! I have no idea what that's like, but it sounds awful! Worked hard to put food on the table, clothes on your back, and to keep your family out of the rain. And what do you have to show for it? No, food, no clothes, and a wet family! But it's not your fault! You were told that if you played by the rules Capitalism would take care of you. But the truth is out of every dollar you sweat to earn, a piece of that sweaty dollar goes into the pocket of some capitalist! And now is the time to take it back! And that is why we have to... (she begins to take a violent, harsh turn) crush the one per cent! Wipe out everything they built and start over again!

LANDLESS

(surprised)

Wait... what?

ALIDA

Smash them all!

LANDLESS

(pulls her aside)

What are you doing?

ALIDA

(back to her innocent self)

It's the only way to get back at Papa! He hates it when I make a mess!

LANDLESS

This is not about your papa! I'm sorry, but please just tell them the truth.

ALIDA

(to audience, again demurely)

The truth is you've been lied to by Capitalists! They don't use money to create jobs. They use the money to buy mansions and TV stations, and ponies for their daughters! But mostly they use that money to make more money, so they can have more power to get more money. (turns harsh again) And that's why we have to burn down every -

LANDLESS
(pulls her away again)
Whoa! What did I say? No ad-libbing!

ALIDA
But Damian -

LANDLESS
Revolution isn't just about smashing things! It's about winning people's hearts with the truth, inspiring them to fight for a better, freer future!

ALIDA
But I thought people like us just wore black and broke things.

LANDLESS
Where'd you get that idea?

ALIDA
CNN.

LANDLESS
(aside) Curse you, CNN!

ALIDA
That's why I'm here - to crush everything!

LANDLESS
No, Tanya. We're not in the business of breaking things -

ALIDA
We're not?

LANDLESS
We're in the business of building! We want to take the country back, not burn it down. If we destroy it what will we win?

ALIDA
Nothing.

LANDLESS
So tell them, Tanya! Why, why don't we have money to pay their bills?

ALIDA
Because the more the rich have the less the working class has!

LANDLESS
And why are they rich?

ALIDA
(to audience)
They are rich because you are poor, they don't have to work because you work so hard! This country was, and always will be, made by you! And the sooner you realize that you are more important than all of them, the sooner we can really

change America! It's time for us to trickle down on them for a while! The time to take back the country is now! Venceramos!

LANDLESS

Bravo, Tanya!

BLOODGOOD and LUCY enter the Occupy Camp.
BLOODGOOD sees his daughter in front of the Masses.

BLOODGOOD

Alida!

ALIDA
(defiantly)

You can't stop the revolution, papa!

LUCY

Why tear down a country men like your father built?

LANDLESS

We're not tearing down, we're rebuilding it into a mansion all of us can share!

LUCY
(damningly)

Damian!

LANDLESS
(dismissively)

Lucy!

BlOODGOOD
(tragically)

Alida!

LANDLESS
(*defiantly*)

Tanya!

ALIDA
(admiringly)

Damian!

BLOODGOOD
(hatefully)

Landless!

BADGER enters.

BADGER
(happily)

Bloodgood!

BLOODGOOD
Gasp!

BADGER
I thought I heard your voice.

LUCY
Mr. Landless, where's my mother?

LANDLESS
(oh so evilly)
At the fire pit... making vegan cookies for the Masses!

LUCY
(shocked)
First you make her a Communist, now you've turned her into a hippie? Have you no shame? Mother!

LUCY runs off, and LANDLESS realizes LUCY might put a stop to the baking.

DAMIAN
Cookies!

LANDLESS follows LUCY off.

ALIDA
(in disgust, to BLOODGOOD)
Papa!

ALIDA stomps off, following LANDLESS.

BLOODGOOD
(to BADGER)
What are you doing here?

BADGER
I told you I'd find someone who'd listen... and I did!

BLOODGOOD
You mean...?

BADGER
The Widow Fairweather! And the receipt –

BLOODGOOD advances on BADGER.

BADGER (CONT'D)
(defensively)
Safely hidden in the camp! You'll never find it!

BLOODGOOD
Is there somewhere we can talk?

BADGER
Right this way...

BADGER exits as ALIDA enters.

ALIDA
(to BLOODGOOD)
What are you doing here?

BlOODGOOD
(as the tragic hero)
Just trying to save America... and my daughter. The little girl I love more than life itself. It breaks my heart to see you here - among all this cardboard and compost. Alida, my dear, won't you please come home?

ALIDA
I can't!

BLOODGOOD
I'll buy you anything you want!

ALIDA
It's not about presents, papa, it's about the people!

BLOODGOOD
Then... I'll get you some of them, too!

ALIDA
What?

BLOODGOOD
I'll buy you a factory, where you can employ all the people you want?

ALIDA
What about my politics?

BLOODGOOD
It'll be a t-shirt factory! You can your put Che Guevara on every shirt! Get your message out there, but still be one of us... Tanya Bloodgood Incorporated!

ALIDA
No, papa! This is my future!

BLOODGOOD
But this is filthy!

ALIDA
(for a moment ALIDA drops the melodrama)
No, papa, this is real. The world can't go on like this - some people with way too much. Most people working too hard for not enough. There's got to be a better, fairer way -

BLOODGOOD

You mean...Socialism!

Song:"SOMETHING NEW"

ALIDA

ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN LOOKING

FOR SOMETHING MORE,

NOW I'VE FOUND IT .

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL IS HAPPENING HERE –

CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?

ISN'T IT MAGICAL?

IT SEEMS WE'RE GAINING SOME MOMENTUM,

A CHANGE IS NEAR ,

I BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.

IF WE ALL COULD WORK TOGETHER,

THERE'S NOTHING WE COULDN'T DO –

ALL AROUND US NOW PEOPLE ARE RISING UP

FROM THE ASHES OF THIS DYING WORLD,

WE'RE BUILDING SOMETHING NEW!

You could join us, papa - be part of the solution.

BLOODGOOD is tempted, but in the end pulls away.

BLOODGOOD

Never!

ALIDA

Than this is goodbye.

ALIDA goes to enter the cardboard.

BLOODGOOD

Alida!

ALIDA
(calmly)

It's Tanya.

ALIDA exits into the cardboard box. BADGER enters.

BADGER

Banker Bloodgood, Come on! I've got an offer for you...

BADGER and BLOODGOOD exit. LUCY enters with MRS. FAIRWEATHER.

LUCY

So you see, mother? All this rebellion and revolution is just unAmerican!

LANDLESS enters unseen, watching the conversation.

LUCY (CONT'D)

This country has enough wealth for everyone - as long as we don't try to share it! Now you wait right here... there's someone I'd like you to meet -

LUCY exits. LANDLESS rails, unseen by MRS. FAIRWEATHER.

LANDLESS

Drat! Curses! Double drat! Lucy Fairweather is telling everyone about her Capitalist vision of America, and the fools are buying it! They're going to give up, leave, and when we are so close! We need something to show everyone the ruthless of the one percent! How they will stop at nothing! I've got to do something... Ah ha! I have it!

LANDLESS exits.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Maybe Lucy is right. Maybe I did give up too soon. But when I think about what Mr. Badger said, about Gideon Bloodgood stealing our money... oh, Algood! I haven't told Lucy yet. Will she think the same thing I think? (angrily, to the memory of her husband) THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE GONE TO THE CREDIT UNION! Oh! I'm sorry! I'm sorry, Algood, my love. You were doing what you thought was best. Of course it (angrily, again) WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU'D GONE TO A CREDIT UNION! But you were always a trusting, forgiving man. But I hope that when I finally do meet Gideon Bloodgood I will have the courage to walk up to him, look him in the eye and say – What's that smell? It smells like smoke! It smells like -

LANDLESS rushes on.

LANDLESS

Fire! There's a fire in the camp! Quick everyone, run!

LANDLESS tries to pull MRS FAIRWEATHER off in one direction.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
But where's my Lucy! I can't leave without her!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER runs off in the other direction.

LANDLESS
Drat!

LANDLESS exits after MRS. FAIRWEATHER.

BADGER enters.

BADGER
The whole camp is in flames! Run for your lives!

BADGER exits. LUCY enters.

LUCY
Mother! Mother, where are you?

LANDLESS enters.

LANDLESS
Lucy, you've got to get out of here!

LUCY
Not without my mother!

LUCY runs off.

LANDLESS
Lucy!

LANDLESS races after her. BLOODGOOD enters.

BLOODGOOD
Alida! Tanya!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER enters.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Lucy!

BLOODGOOD
Are you... Mrs. Fairweather?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Yes, and you are Gideon Bloodgood!

BLOODGOOD
Come, Mrs. Fairweather - we must escape this inferno!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
I must find Lucy! But the smoke... it's getting so thick...

MRS. FAIRWEATHER coughs, and faints.

BLOODGOOD
Wow, they are delicate!

LUCY enters.

LUCY
Mother!

BLOODGOOD
We've got to get here out of here!

BADGER enters.

BADGER
The camp is empty! Run, before the fire consumes us!

BLOODGOOD
Alida!

BLOODGOOD, BADGER, LUCY, and MRS.. FAIRWEATHER all exit. After a moment AlIDA comes out of her box.

ALIDA
Mr. Landless? Damian? These fire pits are getting ridiculous. But... oh no!

ALIDA sees the smoke and fire and runs, vainly trying to escape, but to no avail. She is surrounded by flames! Trapped, she knows not which way to turn, and in the end she is consumed by the fire! (In the original production the fire was simulated with large wooden panels of painted fire slipping out from slots throughout the set. However the effect is produced the more low-tech, traditional melodrama the better.)

Lisa Hori-Garcia as ALIDA Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

ACT VI

BLOODGOOD'S HOME.

Enter BLOODGOOD.

BLOODGOOD
(tragically heartbroken)
Oh, Alida, Alida! Alida, Alida! Alida! Lost in the fire... My darling child! Never to see you again...

LUCY enters.

LUCY
Mr. Bloodgood! There you are! I want to thank you again for saving my mother.

BLOODGOOD
Any investment banker would have done the same.

LUCY
The doctor said she'll be fine.

BLOODGOOD
That's good news.

LUCY
I heard about your daughter...

BLOODGOOD
(reminded of his loss)
Oh, Alida, Alida, Alida, Alida!

LUCY
I thought her name was Tanya?

BLOODGOOD
Alida, safe in heaven with her mother, who's name is on the tip of my tongue...

LUCY
That fire at the camp... it destroyed everything...it seemed to come out of nowhere -

BLOODGOOD
It seemed to... but it didn't!

LUCY
What do you mean?

BLOODGOOD
That fire... was no accident!

LUCY
Not an accident?

BLOODGOOD
It was set on purpose!

LUCY
Who would do such a thing?

BLOODGOOD
Who?

LUCY
Who?

BLOODGOOD
Who, indeed?

LUCY
Just tell me who it was!

BLOODGOOD
I have evidence that it was none other than -

LANDLESS is brought in, cuffed, by the PUFFY'S - who are now dressed as Security Guards.

LUCY
Mr. Landless!

LANDLESS
I didn't do it!

MrR PUFFY
You, be quiet, fella!

The PUFFYS hit him with billy clubs.

LANDLESS
Why would I burn the camp? It was my home.

BlOODGOOD
Where were you when the fire started?

LANDLESS
I was working on a monologue!

LUCY
Watch out! He was a drama teacher!

LANDLESS
About how ruthless the one percent is! I even had choreography, see!

LANDLESS does a few dance step

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
I was going to put it on YouTube!

The Cast of For The Greater Good Photo Michael Gene Sullivan

BLOODGOOD
A likely story!

Mrs. PUFFY
With these socialists, who knows?

LANDLESS
Why are you two doing this? I thought you were part of the movement!

MR. PUFFY
We found jobs!

THE PUFFYS
(proudly)
Bloodgood Security!

MRS. PUFFY
We may not be at the munitions factory, but we're still part of keeping America safe!

The PUFFYS hit landless again.

LANDLESS
I didn't do it! All my life I've worked for the people! Overthrowing capitalism and teaching Shakespeare, to children!

PUFFYS
(horrified)
Children!

The PUFFYS hit LANDLESS again.

LANDLESS
Stop doing that! I've never hurt anyone -

LANDLESS turns and point at BLOODGOOD

LANDLESS (CONT'D)
Except... you!

BLOODGOOD
Take him away!

LANDLESS
This is a set up! I'm being framed! Nooooo...

LANDLESS is dragged out by the PUFFYS.

LUCY
I can't believe it...

BLOODGOOD
It true! These progressives will stop at nothing to tear this country down!

LUCY
But what can we do? Can we stop their occupations - of Wall Street, of state legislatures, of Congress?

BLOODGOOD
It's up to you now, Lucy!

LUCY
Me?

BLOODGOOD
You!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER enters.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(accusingly)
You!

BLOODGOOD
(guiltily)
Me?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(angrily)
Bloodgood!

LUCY
Mother!

BLOODGOOD
Gasp!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
You're the one who stole my husband's money!

LUCY
What?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
Mr. Badger told me the truth!

LUCY
Gasp!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
All these years, living in poverty while you lived in luxury!

BLOODGOOD
Luxury? No! I am an investment Banker! I invested that money in the Greater Good!

LUCY turns to BLOODGOOD

LUCY
You mean... it's true?

BLOODGOOD
Yes, yes! It's all true! The Captain's money did save me... but by saving me it restored my investor's confidence, which saved my bank, and by saving my bank his money saved... America!

LUCY
It did?

BLOODGOOD
That's what Captain Fairweather fought for! In El Salvador, Zaire, Nicaragua -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(getting caught up in the nostalgia)
El Salvador again-

BlOODGOOD
Lebanon, Grenada -

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
El Salvador again -

LUCY
(to BLOODGOOD)
But I believed you were an honest man! I thought you were decent and fair -

BlooDGOOD
Lucy, some things are more important then honesty, decency, or fairness!

LUCY
Like what?

BLOODGOOD
(proudly)
Like... the Free Market!

Fanfare!

LUCY AND MRS. FAIRWEATHER
(proudly)
The Free Market!

Fanfare!

BLOODGOOD
And isn't that what the Captain dedicated his life to?

MRS FAIRWEATHER realizes the truth of BLOODGOOD's words.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Yes... yes it was...

LUCY

Mother?

Mrs. FAIRWEATHER

What's 25 years of poverty for me if it means a better bottom line for America!

BLOODGOOD

So, am I... forgiven?

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

Of course you are!

BLOODGOOD

Thank you, Mrs. Fairweather! Lucy?

LUCY is confused, and not sure who to trust or believe.

LUCY

(looking to the heavens)

Daddy? Is this the right thing to do? Sacrifice everything for the free market?

Suddenly there is the sound of a chorus of angels. Startlingly, high above the action, a puppet of an angel appears. It is the Ghost of CAPT. FAIRWEATHER.

CAPT. FAIRWEATHER

(V.O.)

Yes, Lucy, yes it is!

The ghost of CAPT. FAIRWEATHER disappears, and the chorus of angels falls silent. LUCY turns to BLOODGOOD.

LUCY

Then I forgive you too!

BLOODGOOD

Thank you, Lucy. Or should I say - Banker Fairweather!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER

(proudly)

Banker Fairweather!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER begins to swoon.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER (CONT'D)

Oh! I feel faint!

LUCY

Ah!

LUCY also begins to swoon

LUCY (CONT'D)

So do I!

BlOODGOOD

It's definitely genetic.

LUCY

Is there somewhere we could...

BLOODGOOD

Down the hall... my daughter's bedroom... (sadly) it's empty now...

MRS. FAIRWEATHER and LUCY swoon out.

BlOODGOOD (CONT'D)

Oh, Alida!

BADGER enters.

BADGER

Bloodgood!

BlOODGOOD

(gloatingly)

Badger! It seems your receipt was destroyed in the fire... along with your plans for blackmail!

BADGER

Very true...

Pause. BLOODGOOD extends his hand to BADGER. They shake hands.

BLOODGOOD

Good job. But if I'd know Mrs. Fairweather was going to forgive me I could have saved you the trouble of setting that fire.

BADGER

And the position you promised me?

BLOODGOOD

Chief Financial Officer. It's yours. You will guide Lucy Fairweather.

BADGER

Thank you, sir.

BLOODGOOD

And the Occupy camp?

BADGER

Gone, sir! The street cleaners are washing down the pavement as we speak. The media has already convinced America that Occupy was just a bunch of methheads and hippies, and by next year there will be no evidence Occupy Wall Street ever existed.

BLOODGOOD

Well done.

BLOODGOOD starts to leave.

BADGER

Oh, and sir... I am sorry about your daughter.

BLOODGOOD

Yes, very tragic. But in the end she was on the other side. And sometimes sacrifices have to be made for... The Greater Good!

BLOODGOOD exits. BADGER turns to audience.

EPILOGUE

BADGER
(to audience)
So... ladies! Gentlemen! And the rest of you! That's our story. A tale of money and power, and how those at the top will always be at the top - because we let them stay there. As Bloodgood says, "The people, united, will always be defeated."

Suddenly MRS. PUFFY enters, excitedly.

MRS. PUFFY
(panicked)
He's escaped!

BADGER
Who?

MRS. PUFFY
Damian Landless! That revolutionary escaped!

MRS. PUFFY runs out.

BADGER
(to audience)
Calm down! Everyone, calm down! Don't worry, he will be caught. It won't be hard - anyone who fights the system stands out. In the meantime, be wary! He may be amongst you, he could be the person next to you! Infecting you with his revolutionary ideas... but are you going to listen?

AUDIENCE
Yes!

BADGER
Will you agree to his insane Socialist ideas -

LANDLESS enters. As each cast member enters all their remaining lines are directed to the audience.

LANDLESS
That we have to take back our country?

AUDIENCE
Yes!

MRS. FAIRWEATHER enters.

MRS. FAIRWEATHER
That unregulated Capitalism is killing our democracy?

AUDIENCE

Yes!

BLOODGOOD enters.

BLOODGOOD

That Wall Street criminals should be thrown in jail?

AUDIENCE

Yes!

LUCY enters.

LUCY

And when he says the wealth of the country must first benefit the people who make it, the workers, what will you say?

AUDIENCE

Yes!

LANDLESS

They'll call us villains…

LANDLESS opens cardboard box. ALIDA steps out.

ALIDA

But maybe that's what it takes when you're fighting for justice!

BADGER

The people working together? Is that the kind of country you want?

AUDIENCE

YES!

BADGER

Than there's no more for us to say but -

CAST

COME OUT INTO THE STREETS ALL YOU SOCIALISTS,

ALL YOU COMMUNISTS AND ANARCHISTS,

YOU PACIFISTS EVEN SATANISTS,

ESPECIALLY THE FOLKS WHO ARE

JUST PLAIN PISSED!

COME ON YOU VAGRANTS AND CAST OFF SCUM,

YOU HERMITS AND HOBOS,

AND BEGGARS AND BUMS,

CRAWL OUT FROM THE WOODWORK,

STEP OUT FROM THE SLUMS –

RAISE UP A FIST, STOP SETTLING FOR CRUMBS!

RAISE UP A FIST STOP SETTLING FOR CRUMBS!!!!

End of play

Oil and Water

Script by Pat Moran, Adolfo Mejia
Music and Lyrics by Pat Moran

THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

Oil & Water

Poster by Lawton Lovely

The Keystone Pipeline.

Remember that? Remember the protests? The people desperate to protect their water, their land? Thousands crossed the country to support the First Nations people trying to stand for the Earth against the poisons they knew would pollute what they cherished.

And they were right.

But the other heartbreaking part for so many was that this battle against Keystone was started during the administration of a beloved “Progressive” President - A President who tattered on the fence for over a year about allowing or banning what we all knew was a bad idea structured to only enrich the oil and construction industries.

Since then the Keystone Pipeline has leaked over 210,000 gallons in South Dakota.

With it’s two paired plays, Oil and Water is about looking back from a ruined future, and looking forward from a hopeful, activist present.

“The SF mime troupe is the leading political and satirical theater in the country. I had the blessed fortune of getting my start as a writer with the troupe. They gave me a deeper sense of community, taught me the importance of giving audience a story that enlightens and urges people to make positive change in the world. I will always be in their debt for taking a chance on a burgeoning writer."
MARCUS GARDLEY, AWARD WINNING STAGE AND TELEVISION WRITER

For years, July 4 has meant the kick-off of SF Mime Troupe’s outdoor summer season. Every year, San Franciscans gather eagerly in Dolores Park to honor this tradition and to be rejuvenated and inspired by song, dance, and satire for another year of progressive activism.

For me, no show has been quite as searing nor as sobering as last year’s Walls, a story of immigration and love in the time of Trump. As always, SFMT nailed it, perfectly illustrating the cruelty and racism of the current administration and the absurdity behind our current laws. All that, with catchy tunes, snappy jokes, and a final call to action! Thank you, SFMT for many years of hope and resistance!
HILLARY RONEN, SAN FRANCISCO CITY SUPERVISOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

OIL AND WATER:
The President
The Devil
The Aide
The Senator
Frolkis
Walker
Phillips
52B
Voice Over

CRUDE INTENTIONS:
Gracie
Tomasa
Alfonso
Alfonso's Idiot Cousin
Koch
Chevron Lawyer 1
Chevron Lawyer 2
Canvasser
Larry
Cofan 1
Cofan 2
Ecuadorian Lawyer
Oil Worker 1
Oil Worker 2
Giant Puppet

OIL AND WATER opened on July 4th, 2013, in Dolores Park,
San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Joan Mankin with the following cast:

The President, Phillips, Alfonso, Chevron Lawyer 1,
Ecuadorian Lawyer, Oil Worker 1.....Rotimi Agbabiaka*
The Devil, Walker, Gracie, Cofan 2.....Velina Brown*
The Senator, Frolkis, Tomasa,
Oil Worker 2.....Lisa Hori-Garcia*
The Aide, 52B, Canvasser,
Alfonso's Idiot Cousin, Koch, .Cofan 1.....Hugo Carbajal*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

ACT ONE: DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

SCENE ONE

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Onstage is a desk, with the Seal Of The President of the United States. Something is on the desk, covered with a sheet.

A Secret Service agent, FROLKIS, knocks on the door to the office.

FROLKIS
Madam President, Madam President are you in there?

Getting no reply FROLKIS tries to enter using a key-card, but fails. FROLKIS then punches in a code, the door opens, and FROLKIS enters the office.

FROLKIS (CONT'D)
Madam President?

Seeing the shape on the desk FROLKIS pulls the sheet back, uncovering a dead body slumped face down on the desk.

Horrified FROLKIS re-covers the body and calls for back-up.

FROLKIS (CONT'D)
Attention all agents- Mother Eagle is Down! I repeat- Mother Eagle is Down!

FROLKIS freezes, as a well-dressed, middle-aged Black Man, THE PRESIDENT strolls onstage unseen.

THE PRESIDENT
(addressing the audience)
Some people spend their whole lives working towards something. All the sacrifices along the way, all the deals they have to make- they might not even notice themselves changing, but little by little all the things that once seemed so important fade into the shadows like yesterday's sunlight and they're left wondering what they truly believe in. Well that's my story, and even though it doesn't start here- I suppose it's as good a place as any to begin.

THE PRESIDENT exits, and FROLKIS unfreezes as another security agent, WALKER, enters.

WALKER
Don't touch a goddamn thing!

FROLKIS
Sir-

WALKER
(flashes badge)
FBI.

FROLKIS
(flashes badge)
Secret Service.

WALKER
Secret Service, huh? You wanna explain to me why you're standing here without a scratch on you and we have a dead president on our hands?

FROLKIS
Sir I-

WALKER
You have one job to do. One job!

WALKER begins to uncover the body, but is stopped by FROLKIS.

FROLKIS
Sir, let me warn you it's rather disturbing...

Looking away, FROLKIS lifts up a corner of the sheet.

WALKER
Holy Mother of God. What the hell happened?

FROLKIS
She was in here all night working on something, said she wanted to be alone- I don't ask questions. I'm in the hallway guarding the door, it started to get light outside and I had a bad feeling that something wasn't right so I call her name, knock on the door- no answer. My access card doesn't work so I enter the emergency bypass code- I'm sorry sir.

WALKER
You're sorry huh? Tell that to the American people. Anyone enter or leave the room since you got here?

FROLKIS
No sir, everyone else is securing the area.

WALKER
Then how'd this sheet get here?

FROLKIS
Someone must have-

WALKER, examining the sheet and body notices something suspicious.

WALKER
Hey-What is this stuff?

FROLKIS
I believe... it's oil sir. I believe she was drowned in oil.

WALKER
Oil? Who could do a thing like that? President of the United States. On the 4th of JulyÉ

FROLKIS
It's a tragedy sir.

Another agent, PHILLIPS, enters wearing a lab coat and carrying a briefcase filled with medical examination stuff- scissors, scalpels, etc... He flashes a badge.

PHILLIPS
(to the two agents)
Agent... Agent... Always a pleasure.

WALKER
(referring to PHILLIPS)
Homeland Security- I should have guessed.

PHILLIPS
You think I'm going to sit back and watch you fumble your way through the investigation?

PHILLIPS lifts up a corner of the sheet, calmly looks at the body.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
You gotta call in the grown-ups to do the big boy jobs.

The young, fresh-faced and enthusiastic man, THE AIDE, unsuspecting, rushes in carrying coffee.

THE AIDE
Madam President? Madam President?

All three AGENTS quickly draw their weapons.

WALKER, FROLKIS, PHILLIPS
Freeze!
Drop to your knees!
Hands where we can see them!

AIDE holds up around the neck ID badge

THE AIDE
Sorry- Please don't shoot! I'm just The PresidentiaL Aide- see? I was just getting her morning coffeeÉI saw the officers outside. Is she.. dead?

PHILLIPS
That information is a matter of national security- (to WALKER) agent get her out of here.

WALKER
(to FROLKIS)
Agent get him out of here.

FROLKIS
(to THE AIDE)
Get out of here!

FROLKIS takes THE AIDE out of office. PHILLIPS puts on latex gloves, opens briefcase, begins examining the corpse.

PHILLIPS
Amazing she lasted this long with all the trouble she stirred up. So much for "The Environmentalist President". Here -

PHILLIPS hands WALKER a camera. WALKER takes pictures of the body and crime scene.

WALKER
Clean air, Clean water, Clean energy- you name it. (wistfully) Almost seemed like it was going to happen for a minute there...

PHILLIPS
Remember that picture of her chaining herself up to one of those machines trying to stop the Keystone Pipeline way back in 2014?

FROLKIS returns

WALKER
Yeah, she was really something.

Suddenly alarm sounds.

VOICE OVER
Air safety alert!

Three oxygen masks descend from above. The three AGENTS struggle with each other to the masks- it is clear that they would kill one another in order to get a mask. Eventually they each get a mask and desperately breathe.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)
Please remain calm. Do not attempt to breathe without assistance from a filtration device. The central air purification system is experiencing technical difficulties. This message is brought to you by your friends at Consolidated Petroleum Bottled Water..

A ding is heard. Relieved, he three AGENTS remove the masks.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)
Contaminants have returned to acceptable levels. Have a nice day.

The oxygen masks ascend and disappear..

PHILLIPS
Now, Where were we? I assume you checked the surveillance records?

As WALKER pulls out a tablet and begins entering notes about the investigation, AGENT 52B stealthily enters dressed in camouflage, wearing a beret, and carrying a satchel. The three AGENTS do not notice.

WALKER
Nothing for the last half hour, looks like a problem with the hard drive.

52B
Looks like there was something there someone didn't want us to see!

PHILLIPS, WALKER, FROLKIS are startled.

PHILLIPS, WALKER, FROLKIS
Who the hell are you?

52B
Call me Agent 52b- this should explain all you need to know

52B holds out his ID badge. The three AGENTS read the badge and are impressed.

PHILLIPS
I... didn't know you guys actually existed...

WAlKER
I thought your agency was just a myth.

52B
In your opinion was this death an accident?

FROLKIS
No sir- we believe she was murdered.

52B
So do I- Give me that report.

WALKER hands 52B the tablet, which 52B breaks it in half and hands it back.

52B (CONT'D)
Victim's death ruled an accident.

52B reaches into bag and pulls out juicer

WALKER, FROLKIS, PHILLIPS
Accident?

52B
A tragic juicing accident.

Velina Brown as WALKER, Hugo Carbajal as 52B, Rotimi Agbabiaka as PHILLIPS, Lisa Hori-Garcia as FROLKIS Photo by Fletcher Oakes

WALKER
What kind of juice?

52B
Grapefruit.

FROLKIS
(tragically)
That's the worst kind!

52B
It should go without saying that the conversation we're about to have never took place.

PHILLIPs
Naturally.

52B
At 3 o'clock this afternoon the president is scheduled to make a game changing announcement.

WALKER
Go on.

52B
Following 6 months of top-secret bipartisan negotiations, the government found a way to pay off the national debt.

PHILLIPS
Trillions of dollars.

52B
In exchange- the United States government has agreed to sell off water rights.

WALKER
We're selling our water to the Chinese?

52B
No, not the Chinese- the oil companies.

PHILLIPS, WALKER
What?

52B
We give them our water and they keep giving us oil.

PHILLIPS
What are we going to sell next- our souls?

WALKER
How could she- she was supposed to be the environmentalist president. We believed in her.

PHILLIPS
Serves you right for believing in something.

52B
There's still questions to be answered. She may have been having second thoughts.

FROLKIS
And you think some killed her for it?

52B
The only thing we know is that The United States government is bigger than any one individual and we can't afford to have the general public freaking out, so no one hears the truth about what happened until after the new president announces the water deal. And by no one I mean no one-

PHILLIPS
Including the new Commander and Chief?

52B
Affirmative.

WALKER
But we should be stopping the announcement! Don't you see-

52B turns sharply to WALKER.

52B
Is there a problem?

WALKER
(cowed)
No sir- no problem.

52b
Good. (to PHILLIPS) You!Come with me- they need a forensics report at the press conference. (to WALKER and FROLKIS) You two- clean up this mess. The new president will be here any moment.

52B and PHILLIPS leave. FROLKIS and WALKER begin wrapping up the body in the sheet..

WALKER
(dismissively)
The NEW president. Great. That guy.

FROLKIS
He's not so bad. Makes nice speeches.

WALKER
Sure - he tells people what they want to hear, but he's never actually done anything.

FROLKIS
I say give him a chance. Maybe he was just waiting for the right opportunity.

WALKER
If someone could do this to someone like her how can we expect someone like him to have the courage to start trying to change things?

WALKER and FROLKIS exit with the body. THE AIDE enters, looks around, sees that he's alone, and sits in the chair leafing through some files. THE PRESIDENT arrives and THE AIDE quickly jumps up from the chair.

THE AIDE
Good morning Mr. President, sir- I was just making some minor ergonomic adjustments to your desk chair here. I hope everything is satisfactory. I can always place an order for another model.

THE PRESIDENT
And you are?

THE AIDE
Your presidential aide, sir. We've met before. Many times.

THE PRESIDENT
Right, of course.

THE AIDE
Sucks about the last president, sir, but congratulations on your promotion!

THE PRESIDENT
You're here early.

THE AIDE
Sir it's part of the deal. Aides show up early, leave late, get paid crap, and eventually burn out swearing off politics for good, leaving an opportunity for the next wave of capable young idealists to cycle in for their chance to get disillusioned.

THE PRESIDENT
You've put a lot of thought into this.

THE AIDE
20 minutes to yourself, sir and then it's time to face the nation. You might want to try a different tie-

THE AIDE pulls out some ties for consideration

THE AIDE (CONT'D)
Something somber, yet confident...

THE PRESIDENT
You know what - that's great for now. If you don't mind, I'd love to take that 20 minutes to get myself settled in.

THE AIDE

Of course.

THE PRESIDENT

A terrible thing that happened today.

THE AIDE

She was a special woman.

THE AIDE starts to leave.

THE PRESIDENT

Oh - And don't ever sit at my desk again.

THE AIDE

Of course not sir.

THE AIDE exits. THE PRESIDENT opens a desk drawer- takes out a folder, begins to read it, stops.

THE PRESIDENT

Funny how life goes, you don't get to pick the cards you're dealt, but you still gotta get in that ring and swing for the fences. I spent my whole life trying for a chance to sit at this desk, but to have it happen like this? Maybe she's the lucky one, got to leave this poor excuse for a world with her dignity intact. Me? I'm stuck behind the wheel of a brokedown jalopy of a country headed straight over a cliff.

Song: "BRING IT BACK AGAIN"

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I'M THE LEADER OF A NATION BUILT ON LIES AND

SHATTERED DREAMS,

SHORT TERM FIXES AND GET RICH SCHEMES.

WE'RE IN A RACE TO THE BOTTOM AND WE'VE LOST

ALL CONTROL.

INSTEAD OF DIGGING OUR WAY OUT WE'RE

DIGGING DEEPER HOLES.

THIS TOWN HAS A WAY OF WEARING YOU DOWN,

COME IN LIKE A SAINT AND YOU LEAVE LIKE A

CLOWN.

YOU END UP GIVING UP ANYTHING THEY CAN'T

STEAL,
IT'S A PARADE OF COMPROMISES AND BACK ROOM DEALS!

I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN
BE A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN WHAT WE'VE BEEN.
I DON'T KNOW HOW, I DON'T KNOW WHEN
CAN WE TAKE THIS BROKEN DOWN DREAM
AND BRING IT BACK AGAIN.

HOPE GETS CROWDED OUT BY FEARS AND DOUBT,
UNTIL WE HARDLY REMEMBER WHAT WE USED TO CARE ABOUT.
WE KEEP SELLING OFF OUR FUTURE TO PAY FOR TODAY,
WE CAN CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT BUT IT DOESN'T GO AWAY.

ICE CAPS MELTING, RIVERS RUNNING DRY,
REFINERIES BURNING POISONING THE SKY.
SO LITTLE GAINED FOR HOW MUCH WE'VE LOST,
THE SHOW MUST GO ON, NO MATTER THE COST.

I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT I BELIEVE THAT I CAN
BE A WHOLE LOT STRONGER THAN THE MAN I'VE BEEN.
I DON'T KNOW HOW BUT NOW IS WHEN
CAN I TAKE THIS BROKEN DOWN DREAM

AND TRY TO BRING IT BACK AGAIN,

BRING IT BACK AGAIN!

THE *AIDE* barges back in.

THE AIDE
Sorry again- the Senate leader just arrived. She doesn't have an appointment but says it's an emergency. She was working real close with the former president on something big.

THE PRESIDENT
Alright, send her in.

THE AIDE exits as a very well-dressed, and very pushy SENATOR enters carrying a briefcase.

SENATOR
Mr. President--I just heard the news. Got here as fast as I could!

THE PRESIDENT
Senator.

SENATOR
Hell of a tragedy...

THE PRESIDENT
Sorry I wasn't expecting anyone, I'm still getting my footing here.

SENATOR pulls THE PRESIDENT in close.

SENATOR
Between you and me - I'm glad the old battle axe is out of the way.

THE PRESIDENT
Senator...?

SENATOR
I know- I know- I sound terrible, but what's a little honesty between friends? Must be nice to be out from under that shadow. I have something I'd like you to take a look at.

SENATOR opens her briefcase, pulls out a folder.

THE PRESIDENT
What's that?

SENATOR
Paperwork, formalities. A few loose ends to tie up before the big announcement.

The SENATOR tries to hand the paperwork to THE PRESIDENT.

THE PRESIDENT
Look - I think we just need to slow things down a bit, catch our breath.

SENATOR
In office ten minutes and already planning your first vacation. Typical Democrat!

THE PRESIDENT
That's not what I'm saying.

SENATOR
I know - you're sensitive. Well I'm not. I'm sensible. The White House is crawling with reporters.

SENATOR looks out a window.

THE PRESIDENT
Already?

SENATOR
Take a look -

THE PRESIDENT looks out the window, reacts to seeing a field of reporters.

THE PRESIDENT
I knew there was a reason no one looks out this window.

SENATOR
They're all watching you. The last thing you want to do is make them think you're in over your head.

THE PRESIDENT
With all due respect Senator- This is not a time to be thinking about politics.

SENATOR
It's the best time to be thinking about politics. Still keep the booze in the same place?

SENATOR crosses to desk, opens secret drawer, pulls out a bottle of whisky and two tumblers, pours drinks for herself THE PRESIDENT.

THE PRESIDENT
Hey - that's my desk!

SENATOR
So it is. Here you are- a reassuring face, a smooth transfer of power, and if all that's not enough- you get to take credit for reaching across the aisle and solving the debt crisis - cheers!

THE PRESIDENT
There's a lot more at stake here than the debt crisis. How much longer can we keep those shortsighted solutions -

SENATOR

(steadily becoming irritated)

Don't start talking about the environment. It's not about the environment- it's about jobs. It's about all those god-fearing Americans we put to work building the water pipeline from -

THE PRESIDENT

What are we doing, Senator? I'm talking big picture stuff here. When's the last time you've stepped outside and took a look beyond the containment area?

SENATOR

Why would anyone go outside? They got everything they need inside.

THE PRESIDENT

It used to be so beautiful out there- we ruined it.

SENATOR

We didn't ruin it- we used it to make something better- it's called progress.

THE PRESIDENT

(Gesturing toward world beyond the window) You're telling me this is progress? You know what they're calling us? The North Korea of the Western Hemisphere.

SENATOR

(suddenly vicious)

What's gotten into you-

THE PRESIDENT

The solution is not more oil!

SENATOR

Mr. President- your job is to tell the people what they want to hear--stick to it, and they want to hear that gas is cheap and won't be running out anytime soon. It's Congress' job to make the decisions. (indicating the late President) She learned that eventually and so will you.

SENATOR finishes drink, shoves the glass in THE PRESIDENT's face, who snatches the glass from SENATOR'S hand

THE PRESIDENT

I don't like your tone, Senator.

SENATOR

I'm sure there's a lot of things you don't like..

SENATOR reaches into desk drawer and pulls out a folder, which contains"the speech".

THE PRESIDENT

Stay out of my desk!

SENATOR tosses speech to THE PRESIDENT.

SENATOR
Here's your speech, tough guy.

THE PRESIDENT
Get out of my office!

SENATOR
I was just leaving. But before I go- let me just ask you one simple question - How many people ever died... in a juicing accident?

THE PRESIDENT
What?

SENATOR
Other than our mutual good friend, how many people do you know who died in a juicing accident? Not just grapefruit, any type of juice. How many?

THE PRESIDENT
What are you implying?

SENATOR
(clearly implying something)
I'm not implying anything.

THE PRESIDENT
Are you threatening me? Is this a threat? I am the Pre--

SENATOR
Just be careful allright? That's all I'm saying. Congratulations on your promotion- just don't forget who's running things around here.

SENATOR picks up her briefcase, exits. THE AIDE enters with a tray carrying an enormous plastic water bottle and a tiny glass on a serving tray.

THE PRESIDENT
(slamming fist on desk)
Aargghh!

THE AIDE
You okay?

THE PRESIDENT
(calming himself down)
Yes. Of course.

THE AIDE, using a large eyedropper, carefully transfers a small amount of water from the bottle to the glass.

THE AIDE
Here's your water!

THE PRESIDENT
Remember when this used to come out of faucets?

THE AIDE

Not really.

THE AIDE turns to leave, hesitates then comes back.

THE AIDE (CONT'D)

Mr. President-

THE PRESIDENT

Yes?

THE AIDE

I feel a little silly sir, but I just wanted to say how much I admire your work.

THE PRESIDENT

Well, thank you.

THE AIDE

I know some say you're an impractical idealist and most of the rest think you're a spineless sellout- but not me.

THE PRESIDENT

I'll try and take that as a compliment.

THE AIDE

I know deep inside you're a good person- I can count on you, right?

THE PRESIDENT

(unclear about what he's answering)

Of course....

THE AIDE exits. THE PRESIDENT takes a sip of water. Suddenly his desk, the ground, the entire office begins to tremble. THE PRESIDENT trying not to panic, holds onto his desk, looking around for a cause of the shaking he sees a extravagantly dressed- woman with horns and a tale - the DEVIL - dramatically enters..

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?

DEVIL

You're seriously asking me that question?

THE PRESIDENT

You can't really beÉ

DEVIL

The DEVIL? And Why not? If I wasn't the DEVIL could I do this?

There is suddenly loud club music playing and two demons run on stage. They are scantily dressed and chugging from vodka bottles. There is a a high intensity bump and grind-a-thon (ala "Harlem Shake" for about 10 seconds).

THE PRESIDENT
I'm from San Francisco. That sort of thing happens all the time-

DEVIL
You have a point.

The DEVIL snaps her fingers, and the demons leave

DEVIL (CONT'D)
Well... I can read your thoughts.

THE PRESIDENT
No you can't.

DEVIL
Yes I can.

THE PRESIDENT
Prove it. I'm thinking of a color?

DEVIL
Blue.

THE PRESIDENT
Actor?

DEVIL
Viggo Mortensen.

THE PRESIDENT & DEVIL
(speak quickly in unison)
Potato Pancake Faucet flexible Mustard Breath Complimentary Napkin Sauce Log Cabin.

THE PRESIDENT
Okay! So you can read my mind. Big deal.

DEVIL
Aww come on- it's pretty cool.

THE PRESIDENT
And... you really have a tail...

DEVIL
Well when you have a recognizable image you might as well use it to your advantage. It's a basic principal of branding.

DEVIL looks THE PRESIDENT over, assessing him.

DEVIL (CONT'D)
Congratulations! You're in the big leagues now. Most people go their whole lives wondering if I exist but now you get to know first hand.

Velina Brown as DEVIL Photo by Fletcher Oakes

THE PRESIDENT
Look- I don't know what you want, but you've come to the wrong place.

DEVIL
But I haven't gone anywhere at all. It's you who's come to me. Having second thoughts about the speech, huh?

THE PRESIDENT
What are you talking about?

DEVIL
I'm worried about you.

THE PRESIDENT
I never thought the DEVIL would be so caring.

DEVIL
Neither did I, but a thought came to me the other day. A sudden realization. This could all be over soon. All of this. Not the earth- it's been around for billions of years and will survive long, long after you're gone. It's people I'm worried about.

THE PRESIDENT
Why are you-

DEVIL
Hello - don't you think it's a little scary that your whole city is covered by a climate control bubble?

THE PRESIDENT
Some people would call that progress.

DEVIL
Some people are stupid. Do you know how boring my existence will be if you human guys go extinct? Who will I mess around with? Who will I lead into Temptation?

THE PRESIDENT
That's a rhetorical question, right?

DEVIL
Don't get me wrong- I enjoy death and destruction more than anyone, but the sad truth of the matter is that I'll be powerless if humans become extinct.

THE PRESIDENT
You need us!

DEVIL
So I'd like to help. I'd like to offer you a deal...

THE PRESIDENT
No, no- absolutely not-

DEVIL

It's not what you think...

THE PRESIDENT

Go AWAY!

The ground trembles.

DEVIL

I understand- it's been a rough morning. But should you ever change your mind - all you have to do to call for my help is put your lips together and blow.

Loud bombastic sound cue, DEVIL makes a dramatic exit as THE AIDE enters.

THE AIDE

Sir the Chairman -

THE PRESIDENT

You didn't happen to notice...

THE AIDE

Didn't happen to notice what?

THE PRESIDENT makes the sign of horns.

THE AIDE (CONT'D)

Sorry sir, I don't quite follow you. Is that some kind of code?

THE PRESIDENT

Never mind.

THE AIDE

Are you feeling alright sir?

THE PRESIDENT

Yes of course

THE AIDE

It's been a traumatic day, I'm sure everyone would understand if you decided to postpone the speech - whatever the announcement is you're planning on making -

THE PRESIDENT

I assure you I am quite capable of making decisions without your assistance.

THE AIDE

Of course, sir. I wanted to let you know that the Chairman of the Federal Reserve is here.

THE PRESIDENT

The Chairman of the Federal Reserve?

THE AIDE

Yeah, the guy who makes sure that-

THE PRESIDENT
I know what he does! You just didn't mention he was going to be coming by.

THE AIDE
That's right, I didn't.

THE PRESIDENT
And you didn't mention the Senator was coming by either. Are you just not very good at your job?

THE AIDE
Well you know, sir, things have been hard since the President was killed.

THE AIDE did not mean to let that slip.

THE AIDE (CONT'D)
Since the president died! Things have been hard since the president died.

THE PRESIDENT
Wait - you said the President was killed?

THE AIDE
No, I didn't!

CHAIRMAN, and older bombastic man bursts in. He is nervous, twitchy.

THE PRESIDENT
Yes, you did!

CHAIRMAN
(to AIDE)
I will have you know I do not appreciate being kept waiting.

THE AIDE
My apologies, Mr. Chairman, sir. I'll be leaving.

THE AIDE Exits.

CHAIRMAN
Well, well, well...I guess congratulations are in order.

THE PRESIDENT
Mr. Chairman-

CHAIRMAN
I've spoken with the senate leader and I understand you are having doubts. Perhaps a lesson is in order.

THE PRESIDENT
A Lesson?

CHAIRMAN

The people, the environmental people, they talk about the world and nature and how everything is connected to every other thing and you can't do anything without it effecting everything else. Right? Ripples in the water, Or a bad cough or something, interwoven, you know what I mean?

THE PRESIDENT

Yes.

CHAIRMAN

Well, they're right. Even more than they know. Everything is balanced on a very fine point like this pen.

CHAIRMAN pats his pockets looking for a pen.

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

Do you have a pen I can borrow as a visual aid?

THE PRESIDENT goes to desk, opens drawer.

THE PRESIDENT

Pencil, okay?

CHAIRMAN nods, THE PRESIDENT hands CHAIRMAN a pencil.

CHAIRMAN

A very fine point, like this (indicates pencil tip) and it wouldn't take muchÉ Economics is like a microcosm of the whole world. Everything dependent on everything else, life runs on water, like over 90% and the economy runs on fossil fuels in the same way. And you CAN'T just take out the oil, and the coal, and the natural gas without it affecting everything else. We need them. It all falls apart without them. ALL of THIS falls apart without them!

CHAIRMAN breaks pencil. Suddenly the alarm sounds again.

VOICE OVER

(spoken quickly)

Air safety alert. Please remain calm. Do not attempt to breathe without assistance from a filtration device.

THE PRESIDENT rushes to the closest mask, but the CHAIRMAN doesn't make it, pulling out a personal inhaler instead - but in his rush he fumbles the inhaler, and is left gasping for air. After a moment the all clear sounds.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

Thank you, have a nice day.

The oxygen masks are drawn back up, but meanwhile The CHAIRMAN is in trouble. THE PRESIDENT retrieves the CHAIRMAN's inhaler, hands it to him.

THE PRESIDENT
Just calm down- it's going to be alright.

The CHAIRMAN is distraught, panicked, his calm facade dropped.

CHAIRMAN
This has gone on too long! I can't lie anymore. You can't make the announcement- please, I beg you! Decades of media images, propaganda, advertising, you know what- they worked. They convinced us that we needed oil and we based our lives around it until it got to the point that we couldn't live without it and now the whole thing is collapsing around us and it's too late!

THE PRESIDENT
It's not too late we can still -

Rotimi Agbabiaka as THE PRESIDENT, Lisa Hori-Garcia as CHAIRMAN
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

CHAIRMAN;
The game's over Mr. President, the good guys lost. It could have been different- we had choices. Not so long ago Germany was well on their way to becoming a solar power paradise and what were we doing? Fracking our brains out while Obama was in bed with the Keystone pipeline.

THE PRESIDENT
Pull yourself together man!

CHAIRMAN
This country used to be something special, now we're just a burnt out junkie going fix to fix. Only one thing left to sell. Our water. Our life blood.

Pause.

THE PRESIDENT
You killed her, didn't you?

CHAIRMAN
What?

THE PRESIDENT
You killed the President.

CHAIRMAN
I did not - how can you reasonably suggest that-

THE PRESIDENT
It all adds up... I understand it now...

CHAIRMAN
(with great dignity)
Let me remind you that I am the CHAIRMAN of the Federal Reserve and you may be the President, but it is your first day and accusations like this have consequences, do you understand? This was a bad idea. A very bad idea. I should never have come.

CHAIRMAN hurries to the door.

THE PRESIDENT
No wait!

CHAIRMAN
(defeated)
I don't care anymore, do whatever you want to. In the end it doesn't matter if you make the announcement or not it's still going to happen. They just might have to find someone else to put behind that desk. Farewell Mr. President.

CHAIRMAN leaves emphatically. THE PRESIDENT paces the stage then stops suddenly. He looks around, makes a decision, speaks to the air:

THE PRESIDENT
Alright, fine! I can use that help now! Did you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT puts his lips together and blows. With a flash The DEVIL makes a grand entrance.

DEVIL
Well that didn't take long. He didn't kill her by the way.

THE PRESIDENT
And how do you know?

The devil gives THE PRESIDENT a significant look.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Never mind.

DEVIL
She was murdered though, you're right about that.

THE PRESIDENT
The Senate leader! I could tell from the minute she walked in here that there was something not right about her-

DEVIL
It wasn't her either. You're not very good at this guessing thing, are you?

THE PRESIDENT
Then tell me who it was!

THE AIDE enters.

THE AIDE
Sir, everything okay?

DEVIL
Ahem...

DEVIL points to THE AIDE.

THE PRESIDENT
Really?

DEVIL
Really. Tell him the CHAIRMAN wasn't feeling well.

THE PRESIDENT
The CHAIRMAN wasn't feeling well.

THE AIDE
Oh.

DEVIL
(to THE PRESIDENT)
He had some concerns about the deal the president was going to make.

THE PRESIDENT
(to THE AIDE)
"He had some concerns about the deal the president was going to make..."

THE AIDE
I have no idea what you're talking about.

DEVIL
(to THE PRESIDENT)
You knew about the announcement.

THE PRESIDENT
(to THE AIDE)
"You knew about the announcement..."

DEVIL
(to THE PRESIDENT)
You found the speech in the desk.

THE PRESIDENT
(to THE AIDE)
"You found the speech in the desk..."

THE AIDE
I still don't know..

DEVIL
(to THE PRESIDENT)
You had to stop it.

THE PRESIDENT
(to THE AIDE)
"You had to stop it..."

THE AIDE
I don't like this.

The DEVIL has circled the office, and is now standing behind THE PRESIDENT.

DEVIL
(flirting with THE PRESIDENT)
Damn, your tail looks fine.

THE PRESIDENT
(to THE AIDE)
"Damn your tail looks fine..."

THE AIDE
What?

THE PRESIDENT
(To DEVIL)
What?

The DEVIL shrugs

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
(to THE AIDE)
You killed the president!

THE AIDE
I couldn't help it! She was going to sell out. She was going to sell all of us out. Just like all the rest of them. Just like all the rest of YOU. I couldn't take it. I couldn't take another disappointment. Every time we get someone on this planet who looks like they're going to really change things they end up getting paid off or someone kills them. I wasn't going to let her get paid off- so I killed her.

DEVIL
Quite logical when you think about it.

THE AIDE
I'm tired of waiting. Watching and waiting, and hoping that people are going to come to their senses, because you know what? They're not. Because they're idiots. So I did something about it, and someone died, but you know what? People die every day. And if that's what it takes to get something done isn't it worth it? So let me ask you one question...

THE AIDE suddenly pulls out a knife, and turns to THE PRESIDENT.

THE AIDE (CONT'D)
What are you going to do Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT
This is not the solution.

THE AIDE
I'm waiting.

THE PRESIDENT
(to DEVIL)
I could use a little help -

DEVIL
You got this.

THE AIDE
Come on Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT
Put down the knife.

THE AIDE

Don't make me use this.

THE PRESIDENT

Alright, enough of this nonsense- nobody threatens the Commander in Chief!

THE PRESIDENT lifts up his leg and gives THE AIDE a Karate Kid style crane kick, THE AIDE drops the knife and is knocked back a few steps. THE AIDE rushes forward and the two fight in a flurry of martial arts moves. Eventually THE PRESIDENT delivers a knockout blow and THE AIDE drops to the floor unconscious. FROLKIS runs on stage, gun drawn.

FROLKIS

FREEZE!

DEVIL

(to THE PRESIDENT)

Now THAT was awesome!

THE PRESIDENT

(to FROLKIS)

You're a little late- excitement's over.

FROLKIS

What happened here? Are you alright Sir?

THE PRESIDENT

That man murdered the President of the United States.

FROLKIS

Of course, it seems so obvious now.

THE PRESIDENT

Get him out of here.

FROLKIS

Certainly sir-

FROLKIS cuffs THE AIDE and drags him to his feet and out the door.

THE PRESIDENT

(to the DEVIL)

Thanks.

DEVIL

Don't mention it.

THE PRESIDENT

So what happens next?

DEVIL

I have something for you.

THE DEVIL snaps fingers and DEMON enters, puts a small fancy box on the desk, and exits. DEVIL turns to THE PRESIDENT.

DEVIL (CONT'D)

Open it.

THE PRESIDENT who opens the box and stares into it.

THE PRESIDENT

Is this -

DEVIL

Yes. It's your soul.

THE PRESIDENT

(confused)

But I never-

DEVIL

Yes, you did. The minute you turned your back on the people who believed in you.

THE PRESIDENT

That's when I sold it. Look at it. It's so beautiful.

DEVIL

Ah, you see one, you've seen em all. Remember that deal I was talking about?

THE PRESIDENT

Yes.

DEVIL

Well this is it - this is how you get it back.

THE PRESIDENT

How?

DEVIL

After all this you still don't get it, huh? I don't understand how it could be any simpler.

THE PRESIDENT

But it's not simple- It's complicated. We can't change the way we're living just because we're killing everything.

DEVIL

Why not?

THE PRESIDENT

Because we're too selfish. Because we're stupid. Because- I don't know. I don't why.

DEVIL
Mostly it's because powerful people- like the Senator, and the chairman, and you - have been doing everything you can to convince them that things are fine.

THE PRESIDENT
We couldn't have everyone panicking.

DEVIL
Because the show must go on, business as usual - right?

THE PRESIDENT
Yes. (a realization) Right up until the last drop of oil... right up until the last drop of water. We were cowards. I was a coward.

DEVIL
Are you still?

THE PRESIDENT
I'm not sure.

THE DEVIL leads THE PRESIDENT - to look out the window, indicating the waiting Press.

DEVIL
Just look at them all. Waiting to see what you're going to do.

THE PRESIDENT
What can I do? I'm only the president.

DEVIL
Let me break it down for you.

DEVIL snaps her fingers. Her two DEMONS return.

Song: "YOU'RE GONNA THROW IT ALL AWAY"

DEVIL (CONT'D)

I WAS FIRST AMONG THE ANGELS

BEFORE MY FALL FROM GRACE,

WHEN I STEPPED UP TO THE LORD

SHE PUT ME IN MY PLACE.

I TOOK WHAT I HAD FOR GRANTED

AND PAID A HEAVY COST,

WHEN YOU FAIL TO YOUR GARDEN

YOUR PARADISE IS LOST!

I FELL DOWN TO EARTH
AND FOUND AN OBVIOUS VOCATION,
LEADING TROUBLED SOULS
INTO THE GRIPS OF TEMPTATION.
WHEN IT COMES TO DEVASTATION
I'LL ADMIT I SET THE BAR,
BUT I'M STILL SURPRISED BY JUST HOW SELF
DESTRUCTIVE HUMANS ARE!

DRILLING, SPILLING ,
CLOSER TO DEATH WITH EVERY
GALLON YOU'RE FILLING,

DEVIL & DEMONS

DRILLING, SPILLING ,
YOU'RE GONNA THROW IT ALL AWAY!

DEVIL

OIL'S WHERE THE MONEY GOES
IT'S WHY THE CONFLICTS SPREAD,
WHEN TROUBLES REAR THEIR HEAD
IT'S THE COMMON THREAD,
IT POISONS YOUR RIVERS
AND MAKES YOUR STREETS FLOW RED,
WHY NOT RUN YOUR ENGINES
ON BLOOD INSTEAD?

TAKE A TIP FROM SOMEONE WHO TOOK

ONE HELL OF A FALL,

RESPECT WHAT YOU HAVE OR

YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE IT ALL.

THIS IS YOUR TIME, IT WON'T COME AGAIN

IF NOT YOU, WHO? IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

DEVIL & DEMONS

DRILLING, SPILLING,

CLOSER TO DEATH WITH EVERY

GALLON YOU'RE FILLING

DRILLING, SPILLING,

YOU'RE GONNA THROW IT ALL AWAY!

DRILLING, SPILLING

CLOSER TO DEATH WITH EVERY

GALLON YOU'RE FILLING

DRILLING, SPILLING,

DON'T THROW IT ALL AWAY!

DEVIL

DON'T THROW IT ALL AWAY -

THE PRESIDENT

WE'RE GOING TO THROW IT ALL AWAY!

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I need to veto that water deal! I need to get us off oil- I can't be intimidated, there are some things that are just too important for compromise. And that's how I get my soul back-

DEVIL

That's the deal.

THE PRESIDENT

I'll take it.

DEVIL
Good. Then maybe none of this will ever have to happen.

THE PRESIDENT
How is that possible?

DEVIL
Leave that to me.

DEVIL waves hands in the air, casting a spell over THE PRESIDENT, who starts to sway and sag..

THE PRESIDENT
Suddenly- I feel so tired....

THE PRESIDENT sits behind his desk, and falls asleep.

DEVIL
It would appear my work here is done.

DEVIL exits. After a moment THE AIDE rushes in.

THE AIDE
Mr. President time to wake up. Mr. PresidentÉ your speechÉ I have your grapefruit juice.

THE PRESIDENT awakens with a start.

THE PRESIDENT
Ahh!

THE AIDE
(startled)
Ahh!

THE PRESIDENT
Stay away from me! Murderer!

THE AIDE
President Obama?

THE PRESIDENT
Oh -

THE PRESIDENT looks around, takes in his office.

THE PRESIDENT *(cont'd)*
Was it all just a dream? It was all just a terrible dream?

THE AIDE
Is everything okay President Obama?

THE PRESIDENT

Tell me- what year is it?

THE AIDE

2013.

THE PRESIDENT

And the Keystone pipeline?

THE AIDE

You were just about to announce your approval- I have your speech right here.

THE PRESIDENT

Then it's not too late. What was I thinking?

THE AIDE

Well sir, you announced your climate change initiative a few weeks ago to throw a bone to the environmentalists knowing full well that the Republicans would raise holy hell and then you would seem perfectly reasonable when you responded by green lighting the Pipeline- it's kind of been your M.O. sir.

THE PRESIDENT

Well, I suppose you're right, but all that's changed now. You see I've just had a - well it was more than a dream, it was a - a vision. A vision of a future that no one should ever have to live in, a world where-

THE PRESIDENT notices something on his desk - the box containing his soul is still there.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Is that what I think it is?

THE AIDE

What - this?...

THE AIDE reaches toward box, THE PRESIDENT rushes in and scoops it up.

THE PRESIDENT

Never mind! I'll take care of it - it's personal.

THE AIDE

Sir, I...

THE PRESIDENT

Just leave the speech. I have one last thing to take care of...

THE AIDE exits, THE PRESIDENT opens the box. He reaches inside, cradling something only he can see. His face is full of wonder. After a moment he presses his hands against his chest,

and a wave of pleasure and assurance washes over him. He crosses to the window and looks out.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I'm ready.

THE PRESIDENT picks up the speech he and the former President were going to deliver, and rips it up. THE PRESIDENT exits.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO: CRUDE INTENTIONS

SCENE ONE.

SAN FRANCISCO, PRESENT DAY.

A SMALL HIP RESTAURANT IN THE MISSION.

Two women - GRACIE and TOMASA work behind the counter, cooking and bagging to-go orders. They are happy with their work, have an old school "order up" bell, old school rotary phone, and the sound of spatulas, knives, plates sliding, etc sets the rhythm. They are super fast, efficient, and have bottle tossing moves that would make "Cocktail" era Tom Cruise jealous.

GRACIE
Pan fried pig ear taco with a spicy cilantro, tomatillo and green apple salsa!

GRACIE rings the order bell, and CUSTOMER 1 picks up order, leaves.

TOMASA
Braised ox-tail sopes with a side of garlic and cotija hominey!

TOMASA rings the bell, and CUSTOMER 2 takes food, tries to leave. A CANVASSER with a petition clipboard enters, and tries to engage CUSTOMER 2.

CANVASSER
(To CUSTOMER 2)
Could I get you to support our initiative to force Chevron to make the necessary safety improvements to its Richmond refinery?

CUSTOMER 2
Oh. I don't know. Won't that mean higher gas prices?

CANVASSER
But the fire could have been prevented! They've known for years that the responsible choice would be to replace the old corroded pipes. Instead they forced the maintenance workers to do a short term fix, while the refinery continued to run. Chevron has constantly -

TOMASA reacts to the word "Chevron," sees the CANVASSER.

TOMASA
Chevron?--hey, you canvassing? Buddy, didn't you see the sign? NO SOLICITATION.

CANVASSER
Technically, I'm not actually--

TOMASA
Take it to the Berkeley Bowl, hippie.

TOMASA shows CANVASSER the door, and CANVASSER leaves in a huff.

GRACIE
One zuchini flower quesadilla to go!

GRACIE rings bell, and CUSTOMER 3 picks up order, leaves. GRACIE turns to TOMASA.

GRACIE (cont'd)
You seem on edge, sweetie.

TOMASA
They drive me crazy, Gracie. Seriously. All they do is pester the customers. The world's dying: we already know. Can we just move on?

CUSTOMER 4 enters, goes to counter.

CUSTOMER 4
You still running that special on spicy pork rinds?

TOMASA & GRACIE
Buy 3 get a 4th free.

GRACIE
Queso fresco and nopal salad with pineapple and tequila dressing on the side.

GRACIE rings bell, CUSTOMER 5 picks up order, exits.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(flirting with TOMASA)
So what're you doing later, good looking?

TOMASA
(lovingly)
How am I supposed to get any work done?

GRACIE
Oh, you'll work alright. You... will... work...

Phone rings, GRACIE answers. The CANVASSER, dressed slightly differently, enters, addresses CUSTOMER 5

CANVASSER
Excuse me, sir- President Obama is expected to be making an announcement any day now on the Keystone Pipeline so we've started a petition to-

TOMASA
Again with petiti--Hey! You're the same guy!

CANVASSER
What?

TOMASA
You were just in here a minute ago.

CANVASSER
That wasn't--

TOMASA
That definitely was you. Wasn't that him, Gracie?

GRACIE
That was him all right. He just changed his shirt and got a different clipboard.

TOMASA
I can't believe it.

GRACIE gestures CANVASSER over to her.

Velina Brown as GRACIE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as TOMASA
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

GRACIE
I'll sign, but get your butt out of here before she slices you up and serves you up to the next customer.

TOMASA
Gracie! Why do you enable him!

GRACIE
Oh, come on, we're about to close anyway. He's not hurting anyone. Spicy pork rinds!

GRACIE rings bells, CUSTOMER 4 takes order, exits.

GRACIE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
And THAT was our final order of evening. Good night, San Francisco.

TOMASA
Quick--lock the doors!

GRACIE and TOMASA lock the front and back doors to the restaurant.

GRACIE
Another day ends...another evening begins...and a day off tomorrow.

TOMASA
Yeah- about that, I was thinking that maybe we could...

As TOMASA takes GRACIE into her arms a man in a gray suit--CHEVRON LAWYER--knocks on the back door.

GRACIE
Is that the back door?

CHEVRON LAWYER
I'm looking for Ms. Tomasa Inclino.

TOMASA
Who's asking?

CHEVRON LAWYER
If you could just let me in. My business will take but a moment.

GRACIE
Why don't you try us during regular business hours.

CHEVRON LAWYER
I have an important delivery for Tomasa Inclino.

TOMASA
Fine. Let him in Gracie.

GRACIE opens the door.

GRACIE
(to CHEVRON LAWYER)
We have a front door you know.

TOMASA
He better not be another environmentalist.

CHEVRON LAWYER
I've been called many things in my life but never that.

TOMASA recognizes the CHEVRON LAWYER

TOMASA
(fearfully)
You!

CHEVRON LAWYER hands TOMASA an envelope.

CHEVRON LAWYER
This is a court order for you to hand over a certain item in your possession.

GRACIE
What?

CHEVRON LAWYER
Thank you, ladies.

TOMASA
Hey. Wait a minute...

CHEVRON LAWYER exits. TOMASA tears open the envelope.

GRACIE
Tomasa--what's this all about?

TOMASA
All this time. They...how?

GRACIE
What?

TOMASA
Chevron.

GRACIE
Chevron? Did you forget to pay your gas card again?

TOMASA
No, Gracie. I mentioned something once about this whole film making thing before we met?

GRACIE
Yeah.

TOMASA
It's for my rough cut from--

Phone rings. TOMASA grabs the phone.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
We're closed!

In another location ALFONSO, on the phone with TOMASA, and his cousin, ALFONZO'S IDIOT COUSIN, enter.

ALFONSO
(on phone)
Darling, it's me Alfonso.

TOMASA
Oh--what's up girlfriend? *(to GRACIE)* Gracie, it's Alfonso.

GRACIE takes the phone.

GRACIE
Alfonso? What's he want?

ALFONSO
Well...it just so happens that my idiot cousin double booked us for catering gigs tomorrow. Brilliant at cooking, idiot at booking. Anyway they need someone discreet.

GRACIE
You don't say...

ALFONSO
I DO say, AND I happen to know that you are closed tomorrow.

GRACIE
(to TOMASA)
You wanna do a corporate gig tomorrow?

TOMASA
No, I wanna get high and have a picnic in Dolores park...But we could use the extra money for the honey moon.

GRACIE
(to ALFONSO)
How's it pay?

ALFONSO
Darling, have I ever let you down?

GRACIE
We'll take it.

ALFONSO
Wonderful. If anyone can make up for my idiot cousin it would be you. Thanks, Gracie. I'll send you the details.

ALFONZO hangs up, as he and ALFONZO'S IDIOT COUSIN exit.

GRACIE
There goes sleeping in.

TOMASA
You all cleaned up?

GRACIE
Close enough, we can get the rest tomorrow.

TOMASA
Let's get out of here.

GRACIE
Yeah, and I need to know what's going on with this court order thingÉ

GRACIE and TOMASA exit.

SCENE TWO.

The peaceful sounds of rainforest birds are heard, accompanied by the music of flute and charango. A man in the dress of the Cofan People of Sucumbíos Province, COFAN 1, enters. He unfurls a long blue swath of material, representing a clean river.

COFAN 1 VOICEOVER
There was the Amazon in the time before the sickness when we were many and lived in harmony with the jungle. Pero vinieron los monstros de trueno.

TOMASA VOICEOVER
Monstros de trueno? What are you referring to?

COFAN 1 VOICEOVER
None of us had ever seen a...elicoptero before.

The sound of a helicopter, slowly grows louder as COFAN 1 continues to speak.

COFAN 1 O/V (cont'd)
Before the giants of oil came, we lived from the river.

The helicopter sound has become fierce.

COFAN 1 O/V (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Now, the river brings our death. It is our children who have suffered most, and without our children, how can our people have a future?

COFAN 1
They came to our land in search of petroleum...

Giant puppet of a man/monster wearing a white cowboy hat - OIL GIANT - enters and is flanked by two oil workers - OIL WORKER 1 and OIL WORKER 2 - in matching coveralls and hard hats.

OIL GIANT
To the river!

OIL WORKER 1 and 2 begin pulling another large swath of material - this time black - out of the ground. A young woman - COFAN 2 - enters carrying a baby. COFAN 1 and 2 gather near the river.

COFAN 1
And they soon found what they came for.

OIL WORKER 1
And we didn't even have to placate any pesky Arabs to get at it!

COFAN 2
They grew ever more prosperous.

The two swaths of material, representing the water and the oil, get intertwined.

COFAN 1
As our land grew ever more poisoned.

OIL WORKER 2
Hey - maybe a few billion gallons of waste was dumped into the rivers and streams, but, again, our scientists -

OIL WORKER 1 & OIL WORKER 2
Bought and paid for!

OIL WORKER 1
Have deemed that the levels of toxicity are...acceptable

COFAN 2
All appeared lost.

COFAN 1
But then something incredible happened--

A lively cumbia rhythm begins. TOMASA, and ECUADORIAN LAWYER enter. TOMASA, with a microphone, interviews ECUADORIAN LAWYER for unseen cameras.

TOMASA
And we are here outside the courthouse where something incredible has happened!

ECUADORIAN LAWYER
That's right--they said that we couldn't do it but we have stood strong, and we have defeated them! We have justice!

TOMASA
Here in Lago Agrio, Ecuador a true life David and Goliath story has taken place.

ECUADORIAN LAWYER
The oil companies thought that they could go where ever they want and destroy whatever gets in their way, but now they see the power of people united in a true international effort.

TOMASA
The judge has found Chevron guilty in this massive class-action law suit, and they have been ordered to pay 19 billion in restitution.

ECUADORIAN LAWYER
It is completely unprecedented. Let this be an example to those around the world: see what can happen when the people unite!

Song: "PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

TOMASA, ECUADORIAN LAWYER, COFAN 1&2

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

TOMASA, ECUADORIAN LAWYER, COFAN 1&2 joyously exit, as OIL GIANT addresses audience.

OIL GIANT
This isn't over! We'll take this case to every court in the world if we have to! We won't pay a dime! We'll drag this out until you're in the poorhouse! In the end you're no match for us.

GIANT laughs a long, evil laugh, exits.

Transition to the San Francisco micro-apartment of GRACIE and TOMASA.

GRACIE's brother LARRY is sitting on a couch wearing a Giants jersey and eating a huge burrito while watching a tv. TOMASA and GRACIE enter.

GRACIE
What's up Larry, watching the game?

LARRY
Actually I found this -

LARRY indicates the tv. TOMASA is horrified at what he is watching.

TOMASA
Hey - turn that off!

TOMASA yanks the remote control out of LARRY's hand and turns off tv.

LARRY
But it's getting to the good part!

GRACIE
What is it?

LARRY
Something I found...

TOMASA
Gracie, you asked me if your brother could stay with us for a while, and I said yes, even though we have a micro apartment.

TOMASA glares at LARRY.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
But it's been three months of things like this.

GRACIE
Are you going through her stuff?

LARRY
I didn't mean anything! I thought it might be some weird porn or something. DVD said "Crude Intentions: Rough Cut."

GRACIE
Why don't you just go on the internet like every one else?

LARRY
This is actually pretty good, Tomasa. I mean I know it's not done, and I'm usually not into political films--especially the artsy stuff--but as far as this kind of thing goes, I see potential. I kinda wish I could've been there with you.

GRACIE
This is what the court order's all about, right?

LARRY
Woah, you got a court order?

TOMASA
Yes, I got a court order.

GRACIE grabs the remote.

GRACIE
Let's start it over!

TOMASA grabs the remote.

TOMASA
You can't.

LARRY
A court order - from Chevron?

GRACIE
What's on the DVD, Tomasa?

TOMASA
This is ridiculous! It's...it's not about what's...

The doorbell rings.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
I'll get it.

TOMASA opens the door. It's ALFONSO's IDIOT COUSIN.

TOMASA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Look - it's Alfonso's idiot cousin.

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
I have a name you know!

TOMASA
(apologetic but still agitated)
Sorry. Bad timing.

GRACIE
I thought Alfonso was going to email the details.

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
I'm not here about that. I'm here to see Larry.

TOMASA
Here to see Larry?

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
We got business...

LARRY and ALFONZO'S IDIOT COUSIN begin what seems to be a very shady drug deal.

GRACIE
This better not be what I think it is...

LARRY
Relax, dear sister.

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
$150 right?

GRACIE
Larry, you told me you wouldn't--

TOMASA
Wouldn't what?

LARRY
(to ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN)
You won't be disappointed. This is top shelf stuff--

TOMASA
Is this happening?

LARRY
Premium... Field club!

LARRY pulls out two tickets to a San Francisco Giants baseball game.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Row B, close enough to share a corn dog with Pablo Sandoval!

LARRY hands the tickets over to ALFONZO'S IDIOT COUSIN.

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
Wow. The Panda. Thanks, man.

LARRY
My pleasure. You know where to come next time you need a fix.

Velina Brown as GRACIE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as TOMASA, Rotimi Agbabiaka as LARRY Photo by Fletcher Oakes

They do an elaborate fist dap, and LARRY walks ALPHONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN to the door.

GRACIE

Unbelievable.

LARRY

Just trying to make a living like everyone else. It's not like it's illegal. Anyone want anything from the fridge while I'm up?

TOMASA

I'll take a bottle of water.

GRACIE

We do have a faucet with a filter on it, you know.

TOMASA

It's just easier this way.

LARRY has to climb over the refrigerator door as he opens it to be able to access anything inside. He tosses TOMASA a plastic water bottle.

LARRY
That totally reminds me--I was watching this youtube thing earlier about the Pacific Garbage Patch.

GRACIE
That place in the ocean where all the plastic collects?

LARRY
Three and a half million tons of trash in it!

LARRY'S head is deeply buried in the refrigerator.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Hey, didn't we have a piece of pie left somewhere.

TOMASA
Check behind the almond milk.

LARRY
I never knew almonds had breasts.

GRACIE closes the door on LARRY, trapping him in the refrigerator. LARRY struggle as GRACIE looks lovingly at TOMASA.

GRACIE
Alone at last...

GRACIE begins to move toward TOMASA

LARRY
Hey!

LARRY bursts out of the refrigerator.

LARRY (CONT'D)
It was so cold, and dark!

GRACIE
(disappointed)
At least you got the pie.

GRACIE takes pie from LARRY.

LARRY
Hey! You know Tomasa, while I was stuck in that fridge for what seemed like days--

TOMASA
Try five seconds.

LARRY
I had a lot of time to think, and I don't understand how someone working on a film about poisoned water in the Amazon could turn out like you.

TOMASA
I don't want to talk about it.

GRACIE
Tomasa...

LARRY
Something big happened.

TOMASA
Look--have you ever met someone you trusted or believed in, who made you feel that a difference could be made and then that person let you down?

LARRY
You mean like Barry Bonds?

TOMASA
(*sincerely*)
Yeah Larry, like Barry Bonds.

LARRY
(tragically)
Oh, Barry- the wound is still so fresh!

Suddenly LARRY leaps to his feet.

LARRY (CONT'D)
The Game! I gotta go guys, tickets to sell! You sure you don't want -

LARRY pulls out two tickets.

GRACIE
We're good Larry.

LARRY
Right! Catch you clowns later.

LARRY exits in a hurry.

GRACIE
It's okay Tomasa--I understand you don't want to talk about it.

Finally alone TOMASA moves to kiss GRACIE, but GRACIE crosses away from TOMASA in a flirty way.

TOMASA
That's not fair, Gracie -

GRACIE
(innocently teasing)
I respect your boundaries -

TOMASA
C'mon. Stop.

GRACIE
I'm just going to give you your space...

TOMASA
Okay, fine you win!

GRACIE
You are way too easy.

TOMASA
You have to promise you won't break up with me.

GRACIE
(worried)
Well that's a reassuring way to start off a story.

TOMASA
Gracie?

GRACIE
Fine. But I reserve the right to make your life miserable.

TOMASA
I finished my filming in Ecuador, and when I returned to San Francisco, they found me.

GRACIE
Who?

TOMASA
Chevron...

A flashback as CHEVRON LAWYER 1 and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 enter. CHEVRON LAWYER 2 carries a suspicious looking briefcase.

TOMASA turns around, enters the flashback, and to find two LAWYERS in her apartment.

TOMASA (cont'd)
How'd you get in here?

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
How was your trip?

TOMASA
What do you want?

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
We're here to make you an offer.

TOMASA
That I can't refuse?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
It would be a mistake.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Your footage. We want ALL of it.

TOMASA
Why? Afraid I'll expose you?

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Whether or not you expose us won't matter in the long run.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Those Ecuadorians will never see a penny.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Hand it over and we promise you'll never hear from us again.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Keep it, something non pleasant may happen.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
People have been known to disappear.

GRACIE, who is not in the flashback but listening to TOMASA's retelling, reacts to the threat.

GRACIE
Oh, my god Tomasa...

TOMASA
(to GRACIE)
I wasn't sure what I was up against till then.

TOMASA turns back to the LAWYERS.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Even if those people win, they don't win.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Where as you...you have the opportunity to see at least some return.

TOMASA
A return?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 steps forward and opens the briefcase he is carrying, revealing a very large sum of money.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Consider it compensation for your efforts. We'd hate for you to feel as though this has been a complete waste of your time.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Take the money, give us the footage or we'll kill you and your family and dispose of your bodies in ways reserved for lame horses!

CHEVRON LAWYER 1 pulls CHEVRON LAWYER 2 aside.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Hey! You said you'd behave yourself. *(to TOMASA)* You'll have to excuse my associate. He gets excited.

TOMASA
All you want is the footage?

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
And assurance that you will never speak of this.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
To anyone...

CHEVRON LAWYER 1 pulls out a folder with a form in it, and a pen.

CHEVRON LAWYER 1
Sign here, take the briefcase, and we all walk away.

GRACIE
So what did you do?

TOMASA takes the pen, signs the document, hands both back to CHEVRON LAWYER 1. CHEVRON LAWYER 2 holds out briefcase to her, but she pushes it back into his chest. CHEVRON LAWYER 2 Looks at her, laughs at her ridiculous gesture and exits behind CHEVRON LAWYER 1.

TOMASA
(to GRACIE)
I handed over all the footage- but I held on to the rough cut I was working on. I figured that one day I'd find a way to release it

GRACIE
And that's what they want, the thing Larry was watching.

TOMASA
Yes.

GRACIE
So you're Barry Bonds. Except instead of taking steroids you -

TOMASA
- sold out the movement.

TOMASA sees what she thinks is disappointment in GRACIE's face and is ashamed.

TOMASA (CONT'D)
I know Gracie.

GRACIE
But they threatened to kill you!

TOMASA
Such a cliche right? Stupid American girl tries to save the world and ends up in over her head.

GRACIE
Tomasa-

TOMASA
(breaking down)
I didn't take the money though--I just couldn't- I knew it was wrong, but maybe I should have- I could have probably done something good with it...I...

GRACIE
Tomasa- it's okay you did the best you could. We're only human beings, we're not superheroes.

GRACIE gives TOMASA hug, a kiss, and exits.

Song: "LIFE CATCHES UP"

TOMASA

THERE'S A TIME WHEN IT ALL SEEMS SO CLEAR,

YOUR THOUGHTS ARE SO PURE,

AND YOUR ACTIONS SINCERE.

AND YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD SAVE THE WORLD.

YOU DO YOUR BEST, YOU DO YOUR PART

THEN THEY REACH IN YOUR CHEST

AND TEAR OUT YOUR HEART

AND YOU FEEL LIKE JUST A SCARED LITTLE GIRL.

ALL THE THINGS THAT YOU ONCE BELIEVED

SOUND SO CLICHE AND SEEM SO NAIVE

YES, THEY SAY

LIFE CATCHES UP, IT GETS IN YOUR WAY.

YES, THEY SAY -

SOMETHINGS ARE NEVER GOING TO CHANGE.

TOMASA exits.

SCENE THREE.

A FANCY BALLROOM.

A sign reads: 1st Annual Zuckerberg Gunclub Keystone Benefit

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to the 1st Annual Zuckerberg Gunclub Keystone Benefit.

A shotgun blast is heard, CHEVRON LAWYER 2 enters, followed by a CADDY who is toting a golf bag full of rifles.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Missed!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 takes aim again.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 (CONT'D)
Pull!

The sound of a skeet shooter launching as CHEVRON LAWYER 2 fires. GRACIE enters with a tray of champagne glasses.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 (CONT'D)
And that, my good man, is how we do it!

GRACIE
Champagne?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Certainly.

GRACIE
Oh--

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Yes?

GRACIE
I see you're representing Chevron.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Indeed, I am.

GRACIE
I'm...familiar with your work.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
A fan?

GRACIE
I wouldn't exactly call myself a fan. Excuse me. I have to go check on the hors d'oeuvres.

TOMASA enters and GRACIE hurries over to her.

GRACIE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Do you know who we're feeding?

TOMASA
Paying clients.

GRACIE
But do you know who the paying clients are?

TOMASA
What's it matter as long as the checks don't bounce?

TOMASA exits with trays. A garishly dresses middle-aged man, DAVID KOCH, enters.

KOCH
(to CHEVRON LAWYER 2)
Chevron!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Well, if it isn't Mr. David Koch! How's your brother Charles?

KOCH
Fine, fine, thanks. Couldn't make it today--Giants tickets.

KOCH is handed a rifle.

Pull!

KOCH aims and fires.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
A little too far to the right...

KOCH
You can never be too far to the right.

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 laugh as GRACIE heads over with champagne

GRACIE
Champagne?

KOCH
Certainly.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Mr. Koch, I was wondering if I could ask your advice on a certain legal matter

KOCH
You mean the Richmond Refinery fire?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
No, not that one.

KOCH
You mean fracking in Romania?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
No, not that one either

KOCH
Then I'm afraid you'll need to be more specific.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
The Ecuador case.

KOCH
Oh, that one!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
We've been working on a countersuit to prove that those damn New York lawyers, the environmentalists, and the "people" of Ecuador engaged in a criminal conspiracy against us.

KOCH
Good for you. No reason you should have to pay for someone else's blunders.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Or our own blunders.

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 laugh. GRACIE laughs along politely. TOMASA re-enters with caviar on a tray.

GRACIE
(pointing at the two men)
Look over there--

TOMASA
Oh my God--that's one of the guys I was telling you about, one of the lawyers. If he sees me there's no telling what he would do to me...

KOCH fires a burst of gunfire from a high caliber weapon.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
(to CADDY)
Go see how the man did there.

CADDY exits.

GRACIE
That guy next to him is David Koch--the multi billionaire behind the tea party!

TOMASA
This can't be good--I wonder what they're meeting about?

GRACIE
I don't know, but I want to find out.

TOMASA
Listen to me very carefully, GRACIE - if Chevron finds out that you know about the DVD, they could subpoena you...or worse...and if we start poking around here we're only asking for trouble!

GRACIE
Wouldn't you like the opportunity to fix things -

TOMASA
(unmoved)
Don't get mixed up in this.

TOMASA exits with champagne tray.

GRACIE
Tomasa...

GRACIE heads back to the table with the caviar.

KOCH
And what do we have here?

GRACIE
Locally sourced, sustainable caviar gentlemen.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Sustainable? Nothing endangered?

GRACIE
Sorry, looks like we're all out.

CADDY returns with a polar bear gun target. It is riddled with bullets in the form of a smiley face.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Damn fine shooting, sir. (to GRACIE) Just leave the tray.

GRACIE
Certainly.

KOCH tracks a bird overhead and fires his rifle.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
I'm going to figure out what's going on here.

KOCH
Incoming!

Rotimi Agbabiaka as CHEVRON LAWYER, Hugo Carbajal as KOCH
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

GRACIE takes her smart phone and hides it under the caviar as dead duck lands on stage.

KOCH (CONT'D)
Bull's-eye. (to GRACIE) Why don't you take that into the kitchen and see what you can whip up.

GRACIE
My pleasure.

GRACIE picks up the duck and exits.

KOCH
(to CADDY)
We could use a little privacy here.

CADDY exits.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Getting back to the Ecuador case- Problem is that even with over 2,000 lawyers we still haven't been able to win it. And on top of that some damn documentary we thought we took care of a few years ago just popped back up again.

KOCH
Lawsuits come and go- remember when I got caught "stealing" crude oil from Native America territory? Or that time Charles and I had those 300 spills across six states? Or that time-

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Sorry to interrupt, sir, but they had me testifying in court defending myself, folks protesting outside our shareholder's meeting. How the hell do we get away with things when they're paying attention?

KOCH
It's times like these that really bring us together and help us focus on what's truly important: keeping them distracted, controlling the message.

GRACIE has slowly made her way back in. KOCH notices her and motions for CHEVRON LAWYER 2 to stop talking.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Can we help you with something?

GRACIE
I was just wondering how you might like that duck prepared.

KOCH
Without the feathers.

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 wait for GRACIE to exit before continuing.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
It used to be so much simpler, but nowadays it seems that no matter how much money we give to NPR or PBS, no matter how many papers we buy up...the truth still keeps making it's way out to the masses.

GRACIE sneaks back in again. TOMASA centers, holds the duck as she approaches GRACIE.

TOMASA
What am I supposed to do with...

GRACIE
Shh...Listen...

KOCH
Don't sweat the small stuff. The important thing is that we control the mainstream- let those wacko radicals have their facts. And new media may pose it's challenges, but Mark Zuckerberg has certainly proven to be a valuable ally.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
No argument there.

KOCH
It's never easy for men like us--I am the guy who spent $67 million to fund the climate change denial movement.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Worth every penny.

KOCH
It was, but these things take patience. The Tea Party wasn't built in a day--

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 fires a rocket launcher.

Song: "RUNNIN' THIS"

KOCH (CONT'D)

IT'S YOUR BOY DAVID KOCH IN THE PLACE TO BE

I'M HERE TO REPRESENT KOCH INDUSTRIES

I GOT TWO DEGREES FROM MIT

AND I'M THE RICHEST G IN NYC

BAD BOY BILLIONAIRE WITH THE FRIENDLY FACE

IT'S NOT C-O-K-E IT'S K-O-C-H

CHECK THE WORLD'S RICHEST MEN

I'M NEAR THE FRONT OF THE RACE

MY BROTHER CHARLES AND I

ARE TIED FOR SIXTH PLACE

I'M WORTH MORE THAN 34 BILLION DOLLARS

SUED MORE TIMES THAN GLEN BECK HAD CALLERS

TRUE PLAYER FOR REAL I'M STONE COLD BALLER.

DAMN-ALL THE LADIES SAY HOLLER!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2

CHEVRON GETTIN' DOWN REPRESENTIN' BAY AREA

ALL AROUND THE WORLD CAPE TOWN TO

BULGARIA

DO WHAT WE LIKE CUZ YOU KNOW WE AIN'T

SCARED OF YA

STAND IN OUR WAY WE HIT HARD LIKE MALARIA

YOU FILE LAWSUITS BUT WE WON'T LET IT

STRESS US

WE SUBPOENA ENEMY IP

ADDRESSES

WE CLAIM CONSPIRACY- "THEY'RE ALL OUT TO GET

US"

THEN WE MAKE TAX PAYERS CLEAN UP

OUR MESSES!

KOCH

DAVID KOCH IN THE HOUSE, I BE RUNNIN' THIS SHHHH

CHEVRON LAWYER 2

CHEVRON IN THE HOUSE WE BE RUNNIN' THIS SHHHHH

KOCH AND CHEVRON LAWYER 2

FOSSIL FUELS IN THE HOUSE WE BE

RUNNIN' THIS WORLD,

RUNNIN' THIS WORLD,

RUNNIN' THIS WORLD!

KOCH

IF YOU WANT TO MOVE MOUNTAINS AND YOU

WANT TO RULE NATIONS

START SOME PACS AND SOME FAMILY

FOUNDATIONS

CHEVRON LAWYER 2

SEND PBS AND NPR BIG FAT DONATIONS

THEN THE EXPERTS SPEAK YOUR VIEWS ON EVERY

SINGLE STATION

KOCH AND CHEVRON LAWYER 2

CONTROL WHAT THEY HEAR,

CONTROL WHAT THEY SEE

INTERNET, NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TV

SOME LITTLE PIGGIES PUT THEIR MONEY IN THE

MARKET,

SOME LITTLE PIGGIES PUT THEIR MONEY IN THE

BANK,

ALL THE LITTLE PIGGIES KNOW THE REAL BIG

PIGGIES,

ARE THE ONES WHO PUT THEIR MONEY IN THINK TANKS!

KOCH

DAVID KOCH IN THE HOUSE, I BE RUNNIN' THIS SHHHH

CHEVRON LAWYER 2

CHEVRON IN THE HOUSE WE BE RUNNIN' THIS SHHHH

KOCH AND CHEVRON LAWYER 2

FOSSIL FUELS IN THE HOUSE WE BE
RUNNIN' THIS WORLD,
RUNNIN' THIS WORLD,
RUNNIN' THIS WORLD -

DOLLAR BILLS IN THE HOUSE
WE BE RUNNIN THIS,
STRAIGHT GREED IN THE HOUSE
WE BE RUNNIN THIS,
TRUE THUGS IN THE HOUSE WE BE
RUNNIN THIS WORLD,
RUNNIN THIS WORLD,
RUNNIN THIS!

KOCH

Where's that caddy at? CADDY!

Gloating and laughing CHEVRON and KOCH exit. GRACIE and TOMASA wait on the edge of the stage before entering.

TOMASA
Let's get this mess cleaned up and get out of here.

GRACIE
Are you going to pretend we didn't just hear all that?

TOMASA starts gathering dishes.

TOMASA
What am I supposed to do? What are any of us supposed to do?

GRACIE extracts her smartphone from its hiding place.

TOMASA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Did you record all that?

GRACIE
Yes I did- you're not the only one around here who knows how to operate a camera.

TOMASA
Look, nothing anyone ever does makes any difference.

GRACIE
Then why do they go to so much trouble to keep us quiet?

TOMASA
Gracie- we're nobodies.

GRACIE
Then maybe it's time we stopped being nobodies. Come on.

They exit. The CADDY enters to preform scene change and strike golf bag.

Rotimi Agbabiaka as CHEVRON LAWYER, Hugo Carbajal as KOCH,
Velina Brown as GRACIE Photo by Fletcher Oakes

SCENE FOUR

BACK AT THE MICRO-APARTMENT

The place is a mess.

TOMASA and GRACIE return to the apartment. They can't believe what they're seeing.

TOMASA
What happened here?

GRACIE
LARRY? Larry?

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN comes out of his hiding place behind the fridge.

TOMASA
What are you doing here? Did you do this?

GRACIE
Where's LARRY?

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
It wasn't me! The cops. Then LARRY got arrested. I don't know.

GRACIE
LARRY was arrested?

ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN
(he acts out what happened when the cops showed up)
I came looking for LARRY. To buy more tickets.
(he runs outside and knocks on the door)
Then came the knock on the door. "Police", they said. "Police?" LARRY said.
(ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN mimes grabbing someone by the collar. As LARRY)
"But I'm not breaking any laws. I know my rights! They come in talking about some court order for a DVD. I don't know what she did with it."
(acts like COP)
"You're lying."
(acts like a scared LARRY)
"I swear."
(acts like COP)
"You're coming with us. Obstruction of justice." They cuffed Larry and told me not to move or say a word. They found the DVD and then they took Larry- What's going on?

GRACIE
I'll tell you on the way to the station, come on.

TOMASA

Yeah, let's go.

GRACIE

Not you Tomasa.

TOMASA

What?

GRACIE

If they took Larry what do you think they're going to do to you?

TOMASA

Gracie, this is my problem-

GRACIE

This is our problem and I am not bailing out two people in one night-

TOMASA

But-

GRACIE

And that's final. Just wait here and call if anything happens.

GRACIE and ALFONSO'S IDIOT COUSIN leave. After a moment GRACIE and LARRY enter.

TOMASA

How'd it go?

LARRY

Could have been worse.

TOMASA

I'm so sorry.

LARRY

Probably my own fault for going through your stuff.

GRACIE

They decided not to press any charges.

TOMASA

I'll make it up to you Larry seriously I-

Suddenly a loud obnoxious cell phone ring startling everyone.

LARRY

What the hell is that?

GRACIE

You have got to do something about that new ringtone Tomasa.

TOMASA

Sorry.

TOMASA looks at phone number

TOMASA (CONT'D)
That's weird. (on phone) Hello?- yes it is- yes of course- oh he did did he?- well, we're glad we left such a good impression- Yes, we are definitely available- we'll be sure to prepare something extra- special- Thank You- Ok bye.

GRACIE
What was that all about?

LARRY
Why do you have that funny look on your face?

TOMASA
Larry- what are you doing tomorrow?

LARRY
Hopefully not getting arrested again.

TOMASA starts texting on phone.

TOMASA
You want to work at the restaurant?

LARRY
What?

GRACIE
Something's not right here.

TOMASA
Gracie- you and I have a catering gig and won't be able to make it in.

GRACIE
We do?

LARRY
Wait- I don't actually know how to run a restaurant...

TOMASA receives a text message.

TOMASA
Not a problem- it looks like Casimiro has the day off and would be happy to come help out.

GRACIE
Casimiro?

LARRY
Alfonso's cousin.

GRACIE
Oh- I always wondered what his name was.

TOMASA
He's meeting us at the restaurant. Just trust me, let's go.

Exeunt..

SCENE FIVE

AT THE ZUCKERBERG GUN CLUB.

DAVID KOCH enters.

KOCH
Now, where are those pretty ladies at?

GRACIE enters with glasses of champagne and a bottle.

GRACIE
Here you are, sir!

KOCH
Ahh - you again. Very good. My lawyer friend will be glad to see you - between the two of us he was quite taken with you the other day.

GRACIE
You're too kind.

KOCH
A lot of people don't know that about me- they think I'm some kind of monster. They just don't understand that what a man does in his professional life has absolutely no bearing on who he is as a person.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 enters.

KOCH *(cont'd)*
Chevron!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
(looking at GRACIE)
Well, if it isn't my little drop of sunshine...

GRACIE
Champagne, sir?

TOMASA, in disguise, enters carrying a tray of hors d'oeuvres. KOCH eyes TOMASA hungrily.

KOCH
And who may I ask is this?

GRACIE
This is our new server - her name is Bamusa.

KOCH
Bamusa -

GRACIE
Pardon me.

GRACIE exits to get the main dishes.

KOCH
That's beautiful. What kind of name is that?

TOMASA
(speaking with an accent)
It is foreign.

KOCH
Really- well I happen to have a taste for the exotic. Did you know I made a small fortune selling petrochemicals to Iran?

TOMASA
Very good, sir. Very good.

KOCH
This champagne is really something

GRACIE re-enters.

GRACIE
Gentlemen- for your main course- Braised pork spine over yucca cake with an apple slaw and mole de petroleo.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Mmm mmm mmm- now that looks divine- didn't I tell you she was something special.

GRACIE
You are much too kind. We will be back shortly with your desert.

TOMASA
Very good, sir. Very good.

GRACIE and TOMASA exit.

KOCH
And they say it's hard to find good help.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Well - let's have a toast to our success. The president will be making the keystone announcement in just a few short hours.

KOCH
I can already smell the oil!

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 start to eat.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Now... this is simply delicious!

KOCH
Yes, it has a certain briny quality to it that I find remarkably appealing.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Reminds me of something... but I can't quite place it...

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 gorge themselves.

GRACIE enters with Champagne bottle, refills glasses, KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 1 finish their food and drink champagne.

TOMASA enters with desert.

GRACIE
Perfect timing. Gentlemen- for dessert we present to you - Chocolate River of Death.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Chocolate river of death- never heard of that before!

TOMASA
It is foreign.

KOCH
Of course it is. Looks exquisite.

GRACIE and TOMASA exit. KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 1 dig in to desert. CHEVRON LAWYER 1 stops.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Ohhh, Suddenly I'm not feeling so well, I think maybe I...

KOCH
Now that you mention it I'm starting to get a little queasy myself.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Maybe I should...

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 tries to get up and steadies himself back into the chair.

KOCH
Are you alright? You look a little bit- ohhh that didn't sit so well.... Miss? Miss?

GRACIE and TOMASA return.

GRACIE
Everything ok?

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
Actually no- we're feeling rather ill.

KOCH
What did you put in that food?

GRACIE
I'm not sure what you mean. Hmm... we did put a little oil in it.

KOCH & CHEVRON LAWYER 2
What?

GRACIE
But that never hurt anyone right?

TOMASA takes off her disguise, KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 are writhing on the floor.

TOMASA
Right! Gracie I couldn't imagine there'd be any problems. All the studies show that the amounts used were well within acceptable levels.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2 recognizes TOMASA.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
You!

TOMASA
That's right. Me.

KOCH
You'll never get away with this! Do you know who I am?

GRACIE
We know exactly who you are, and soon the rest of the world will too.

GRACIE pulls out her smart phone and plays a section of the recording.

KOCH AND CHEVRON LAWYER 2

CONTROL WHAT THEY HEAR,

CONTROL WHAT THEY SEE

INTERNET, NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TV

GRACIE turns off recording.

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
You recorded that?

GRACIE
Yes, I did. And I uploaded it on YouTube a few hours ago. It already has 19 million views- I expect it to be the biggest thing since Gangnam style!

KOCH
Let's get out of here - I need a doctor!

CHEVRON LAWYER 2
We'll get you - damned environmentalists!

KOCH and CHEVRON LAWYER 2 crawl off stage.

SCENE SIX

CIVIC CENTER

CANVASSER walks onstage struggling to carry several protest signs - each with a slogan condemning the Keystone Pipeline. TOMASA and GRACIE enter.

TOMASA
What's going on? Look at all the people.

GRACIE
I don't know, Giants Game? Hey- Is that who I think it is? Tomasa-

GRACIE points toward CANVASSER

TOMASA
That's the guy with all the petitions!

GRACIE
Yeah, the one you attacked with the spatula-

TOMASA walks over to CANVASSER.

TOMASA
Hey man- I just wanted to-

Recognizing her, CANVASSER shields himself with picket sign.

CANVASSER
Ahh! Stay away from me Demon lady!

TOMASA
No - it's cool - look- I'm sorry about the other day, it wasn't you, it was me.

GRACIE
What's everyone doing?

CANVASSER
You don't know? Obama's finally going to deliver his announcement on the Keystone Pipeline.

TOMASA
At the Civic Center?

CANVASSER
No dude, On the Jumbotron.

A LONGHAIRED PROTESTOR enters.

CANVASSER (CONT'D)
Hey bro - take a sign!

LONGHAIRED PROTESTOR takes a sign, exits.

TOMASA

Can we help?

CANVASSER

Seriously?

TOMASA

Seriously.

CANVASSER

Awesome. Here take these signs and hand them out, just a couple more minutes till the speech!

CANVASSER takes an plastic stadium horn out of the bag and blows it while exiting.

TOMASA and GRACIE take signs, hand them out to audience members. ALFONSO enters.

ALFONSO

If it isn't Thelma and Louise!

TOMASA & GRACIE

Alfonso!

ALFONSO

I would have thought the two of you would be halfway to Mexico by now.

GRACIE

You heard?

ALFONSO

Darling- remember who got you that catering job in the first place.

TOMASA

Oh yeah, sorry...

ALFONSO

No need for apologies- I know the manager over at the gunclub and apparently those two scumbags are so embarrassed by the whole incident that they're pretending it never happened.

GRACIE

For real?

ALFONSO

For real! But you didn't hear any of this from me. And apparently they're both in hiding after some video went viral of them bragging about some sinister plot to control the corporate media. But I don't suppose you two would know anything about that.

TOMASA

Who...us?

GRACIE
No idea what you're talking about.

TOMASA
You here to watch the speech? Here take a sign.

ALFONSO
Well, well- I never thought I would see the day. I'll catch up with you a little later I'm meeting Casimiro over by the BART stop.

ALFONZO takes sign and exits. COFAN 1 enters.

COFAN 1
Mi Amiga - Tomasa!

TOMASA
Pablo?

GRACIE
Who the heck is that?

TOMASA
He's my friend from Ecuador. Oh - this is my fiancee Gracie.

COFAN 1
So wonderful to see you both. I have been in town protesting at the San Ramon Chevron Headquarters. I was meaning to look you up. What happened with your film?

TOMASA
It's kind of a long story- but for now let's just say that I'm back in the game.

GRACIE
Why does it seem like everyone knows about this film but me? Care for a sign?

GRACIE hands COFAN 1 a sign.

COFAN 1
Thank you. Today is a most important day. I took my first breath of the morning and I could feel the air was different, fresher. We have been through so many troubles, but I believe that the world is finally waking up.

TOMASA
You know, I feel a little corny saying it but I think you might be right.

GRACIE
Hey guys - I think it's starting!

TOMASA, GRACIE, COFAN 1 sit as OBAMA enters, as if on the jumbotron.

THE PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans-

I had a speech that I'd been working on all week, but let's just say that inspiration sometimes comes from the strangest of places and I had a last minute change of plans.

Let me start with the bad news. We're in a tough spot here- the experts tell us that we have less than 15 years to drastically change our relationship with energy or we face catastrophic and irreversible effects. We face the most serious threat we have ever faced and I admit that I have not been pulling my weight, but all that changes right now.

I am at this very moment signing a series of executive orders calling for an immediate end to all fossil fuel subsidies; complete federal divestment from oil, coal, and natural gas within 5 years; and a mandate that within 10 years all new cars sold within the United States must be alternative fuel vehicles. Starting tomorrow I'm putting everyone who wants a job to work retooling our factories, installing solar panels, building wind turbines, and doing every damn thing in our power to turn this thing around. And I can assure you that the Keystone Pipeline will sure as hell not be happening under my watch. So who's with me? I think it's about time we show once and for all what happens when the people of the world get up and unite!

Song: "PEOPLE OF THE WORLD REPRISE"

CAST

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD GET UP, UNITE!

End of play

Ripple Effect

Script by
Michael Gene Sullivan, Eugenie Chan, Tanya Shaffer

Music and Lyrics by Ira Marlowe

The San Francisco Mime Troupe

presents

Ripple Effect

Photos by: DavidAllenStudio.com
Poster Design by: Nina Grosser

The Housing Crisis of the early twenty-teens squeezed renters and homeowners alike. After the Crash of ’08 it was hard to get a mortgage unless you didn’t need one, and the joke about the new “affordable” housing was that it was only affordable to those that could afford it. Around the country hard-working people suddenly had to wonder how long they could keep a roof over their heads.

Meanwhile, in the San Francisco Bay Area, the aorta of the bleeding heart of Liberalism, things had changed. Hippies had been displaced by Yuppies had been displaced by Hipsters had been displaced by Techies with way too much money. The area that gave birth to the Free Speech Movement an the Black Panthers was on its way to being the gated playground of the uber-rich, the uber-exclusive, and the uber-Uber.

When leading millionaire tech bro Greg Gopman said of the homeless "The degenerates gather like hyenas, spit, urinate, taunt you…There is nothing positive gained from having them so close to us. It's a burden and a liability” he was speaking for the new wave of elite immigrants who wanted to co-opt the reputation of a San Francisco zip code, and to counter the inconvenient culture of Revolution.

And while these suddenly rich tech CEOs about bought mansions and evicted tenants and fantasized about putting the homeless on ships out at sea, the tech their workers created was being used to pilot drones, track our movements, and listen in on our conversations.

But who were these employees? Were/are they also villains, or unwitting tools? Cold-hearted, Google Bus riding sociopaths who only want to “move fast and break things” like their bosses, or just a new type of exploited worker being used to undermine our civil rights and Democracy, not knowing they will be discarded as easily as those they displaced?

“There's a lot packed into this satire of modern San Francisco, from fancy food trucks to surveillance culture and over reliance on smartphones. But most of all, it drives home the point that to accept the status quo is as much a political stance as to fight against it. As Deborah says, "There is no such thing as not political.”
MARIN INDEPENDENT

CAST OF CHARACTERS
Tour Leader
Male Tour Member
Female Tour Member
Jeanine Adenaur
Sunny Nguyen
Deborah Johnson
Brother
Mother
Father
Gus
Mama
Granny
Letter Carrier
Octopus
Marius
Amber
Marcie
Carla
Dennis

RIPPLE EFFECT opened on July 4th, 2014, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Wilma Bonet and Hugo Carbajal with the following cast:

Tour Leader, Sunny Nguyen, Granny,
Amber, Carl……Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro*
Jeanine Adenaur, Mother, Marcie, Carla……Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Deborah Johnson, Brother, Gus, Mama……..Velina Brown*
Male Tour Member, Father, Letter Carrier,
Octopus, Marius……Michael Gene Sullivan*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

FISHERMAN'S WHARF, SAN FRANCISCO.

Downstage is a low pier at Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco. Boxes, nets, tackle. Upstage is the side of a boat, which says "The Distant Horizon." A gaudily dressed TOUR LEADER enters, carrying a megaphones, which is loudly playing the song "SAN FRANCISCO." Following the TOUR LEADER are a few very excited TOURISTS (FEMALE TOUR MEMBER, MALE TOUR MEMBER), and a young, primly-dressed woman, JEANINE ADENAUER. While the TOURISTS run excitedly looking at one attraction or another JEANINE seems quite nervous and overwhelmed by the hectic energy and noise of the tour and the City.

TOUR LEADER
And here we are, at the world-famous Fisherman's Wharf!

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd)*
On your left is the world-famous Ghirardelli Square -

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd))*
On your right the world-famous Cannery -

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd)*
Behind you - the world-famous Coit Tower-

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd)*
And over there - Pier 39!

MALE TOUR MEMBER raises his hand.

MALE TOUR MEMBER
Hey, I have a question... where can I get crabs?

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER
John! Again?

MALE TOUR MEMBER
Not that kind!

MALE TOUR MEMBER and FEMALE TOUR MEMBER both laugh, as MALE TOUR MEMBER raises his camera.

MALE TOUR MEMBER *(cont'd)*

Pose!

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER strikes a pose as MALE TOUR MEMBER takes a picture of her.

TOUR LEADER

On your left, the world-famous Alcatraz Island!

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd)*

On your right the world-famous Bay Bridge!

TOURISTS take pictures.

TOUR LEADER (*cont'd*)

Behind you the world-famous Pyramid Building!

TOURISTS take pictures.

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALE TOUR MEMBER, Velina Brown as FEMALE TOUR MEMBER
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

TOUR LEADER *(cont'd)*
And over there - Pier 39!

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER
Where are the fishermen?

MALE TOUR MEMBER
I guess they weren't very photogenic. Pose!

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER strikes a pose as MALE TOUR MEMBER takes a picture of her.

TOUR LEADER
And there - through the fog... the Golden Gate Bridge!

TOUR LEADER AND TOURISTS
(in awe)
World famous!

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER
But it's is not gold.

MALE TOUR MEMBER
Pose!

FEMALE TOUR MEMBER strikes a pose as MALE TOUR MEMBER prepares to takes a picture of her., but realizes JEANINE is in the way.

MALE AND FEMALE TOURISTS
(to JEANINE)
Do you mind?

JEANINE steps out of the way as FEMALE TOUR MEMBER strikes a pose, and MALE TOUR MEMBER takes a picture of her in front of the Golden Gate Bridge.

TOUR LEADER
And, of course, Pier 39!

TOURISTS
(again?)
Ooohhh...

TOUR LEADER
With its world-famous gift shop!

TOURISTS
(suddenly excited)
Oooooh!

TOUR LEADER
So fifteen minutes of shopping, then our next stop is world-famous Haight Ashbury! And get those cameras ready - summer is hippie season!

TOURISTS
Far out!

The two TOURISTS exit. TOUR LEADER notices that JEANINE, isn't following, and looks strangely panicked.

TOUR LEADER
(to JEANINE)
Are you coming? Don't worry - all real hippies were evicted long ago. Now it's just hipsters with tattoos!

JEANINE
I can't take any more! The noise, the people! I'm from a small town! I'm not use to all this! I'm overstimulated!

TOUR LEADER
Then what are you doing in San Francisco?

Burst of city noise clearly rattles JEANINE..

JEANINE
The company I work for bought a building here. They're converting it into condos for employees, and the CEO wants us to know the City. But it's so different from where I live now.

TOUR LEADER
Where do you live now?

JEANINE
At work. Under my desk.

Another burst of city noise.

TOUR LEADER
Listen, sweetie, I gotta get my tour to the Haight before all the local color nods off. You gonna be okay?

JEANINE starts to hyperventilates

TOUR LEADER (CONT'D)
Good.

TOUR LEADER Exits.

Just as JEANINE calms down there is a blast of car horns and jackhammers. Surrounded by the noise of The City JEANINE is on the edge of breakdown.

Song: "MY CUBICLE"

JEANINE
THIS IS TOO MUCH! THIS IS TOO MUCH -

CHORUS
(offstage)

TOO MUCH!

JEANINE

STIMULATION, OVERSTIMULATION!

THIS IS TOO MUCH! THIS IS TOO MUCH -

CHORUS
(offstage)

TOO MUCH!

JEANINE

GOTTA FIND A WAY, A WAY TO GET AWAY

I'M NOT FROM HERE, I'M NOT USED TO THIS,

OVERLOADED, SYSTEM OVERLOADED!

I DON'T WANNA HAVE ANOTHER PANIC ATTACK

GOTTA GET BACK, GOTTA BACK...

CHORUS enters with padded cubicle walls, with which they lovingly surround JEANINE, who immediately calms down.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

TO MY CUBICLE... MY CUBICLE...

IT'S HOME SWEET HOME FOR A SENSITIVE GIRL,

IT'S A PADDED ROOM IN A CRAZY WORLD.

MY CUBICLE IS WHERE

I GO TO BREATHE THAT OFFICE AIR,

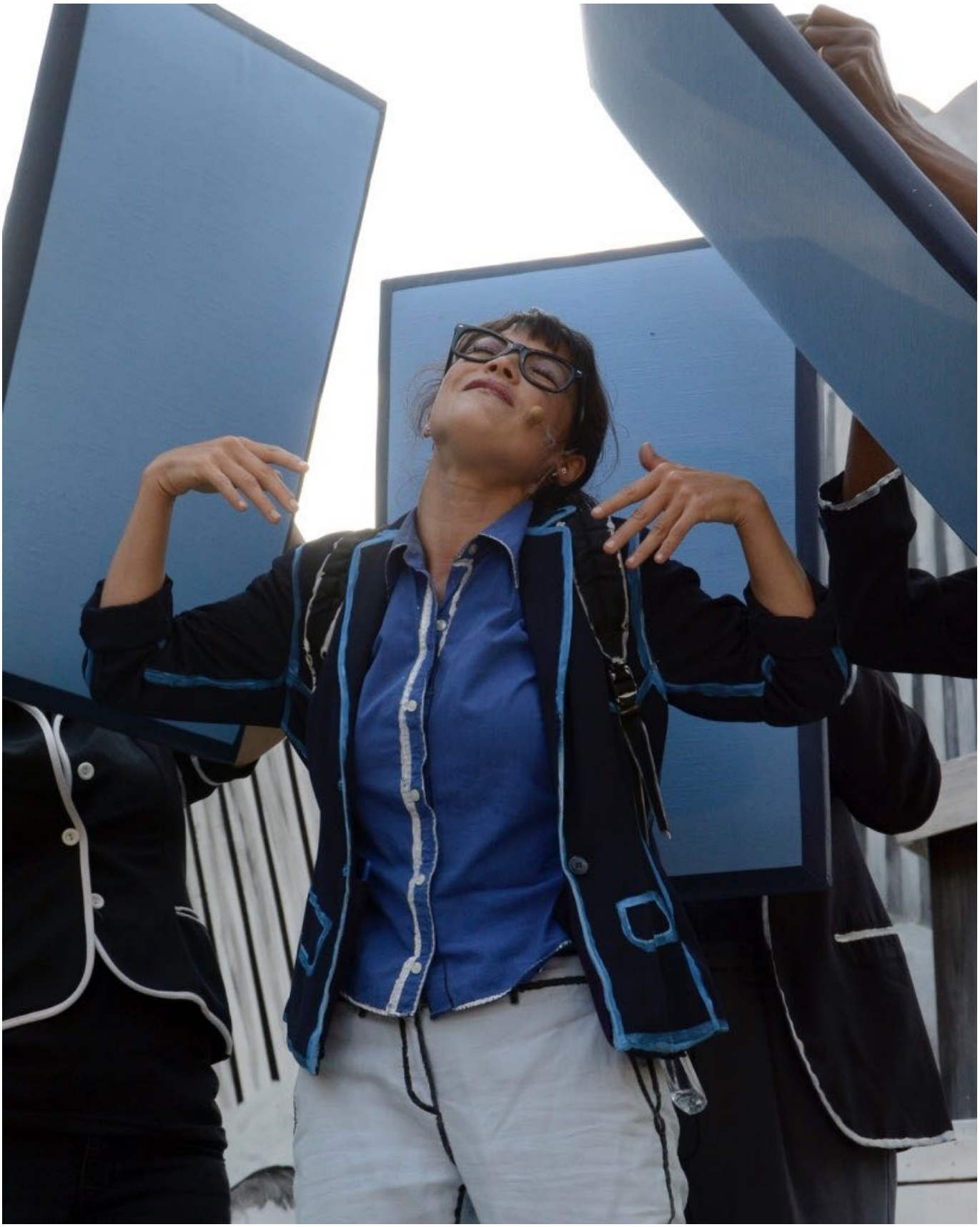
IT'S WHERE I CHASE MY BEAUTIFUL DREAM

AND WITH A WIRELESS MOUSE

AND ENOUGH CAFFEINE.

I'LL MAKE THIS WORLD A PLACE

WHERE EVERYONE IS SAFE.



Lisa Hori-Garcia as JEANINE Photo by Fletcher Oakes

The walls to the cubicle close in and hold JEANINE in an embrace, as the CHORUS sings background.

MY CUBICLE... MY CUBICLE...

IT'S HOME SWEET HOME FOR A SENSITIVE GIRL,

IT'S A PADDED ROOM IN A CRAZY WORLD,

MY CUBICLE... MY CUBICLE!

CHORUS exits, as JEANINE tries to stay relaxed. JEANINE. SUNNY NGUYEN, a Vietnamese immigrant enters. She is decked out is red, white, and blue, with cowboy hat and cowboy boots. SUNNY is using her phone's GPS to find her way.

SUNNY
(to JEANINE)
Hello, please can you help me?

JEANINE has not noticed SUNNY, who taps JEANINE on the shoulder.

JEANINE
(surprised)
Ahhh!

SUNNY
What is wrong?

JEANINE
I'm OVERSTIMULATED!

SUNNY
Over what?

JEANINE
OVERSTIMULATED!

SUNNY
Sounds like you need a vacation.

JEANINE
I've never had a vacation!

SUNNY
Just like me! (offering her hand) Sunny Nguyen.

JEANINE just looks at SUNNY's hand.

JEANINE
Jeanine Adenauer.

SUNNY
I work all the time too! I have my own salon - Sunny's Beautiful House of Beautay! All day long it is work in the shop, watch my daughter, work in the shop, watch my daughter! But you know what? This is America, and even Donald Trump takes a day off!

JEANINE
That's true...

SUNNY
So yesterday, at my daughter's school, when I won a raffle for The Distant Horizon -

JEANINE
(intrigued)
The Distant Horizon?

SUNNY
That's the name of the tour boat. And I thought this is a lucky sign! Today a raffle; tomorrow, the lottery!

A strange alert sounds in SUNNY's purse. SUNNY pulls out her phone, examines it, then dials.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
Tiffany! Where are you going? Never mind how I know! Get back inside, do your homework! (SUNNY hangs up.) All I want is to relax-

Another alert sound in SUNNY's purse. She pulls out her phone and dials.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
(on phone)
What did I just say? I don't want you talking to that boy! Never mind how I know! Back inside! (She hangs up again.) Relax, and not have to worry.

Another alert. SUNNY pulls phone out and dials.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
(on phone)
No!

SUNNY hangs up.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
You should come with me!

JEANINE
Where?

SUNNY
On the cruise!

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as SUNNY, Lisa Hori-Garcia as JEANINE
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

JEANINE
Me?

SUNNY
Why not?

JEANINE
I don't know - does it have cubicles?

SUNNY
A little break from work. The Distant Horizon...

JEANINE
(dreamily)
The Distant Horizon -

SUNNY
It could help you unwind.

JEANINE
Unwind? Wait - Rubin's Rule #14!:
"Sometimes the best way to reset your mind
Is to find a way to relax and unwind!"

SUNNY
Who is Rubin?

JEANINE
Rubin M. Masterson, the CEO of Octopus Tech - my boss! He's brilliant! And if Rubin says I should unwind-

SUNNY
Then?

JEANINE
I should unwind!

SUNNY
So we'll be on the same tour! America!

SUNNY enthusiastically hugs JEANINE, who freezes up.

JEANINE
(uncomfortably)
You're hugging me.

SUNNY
Yes, I am!

JEANINE
Why are you hugging me?

SUNNY
Because that is what we Americans do when we are happy!

JEANINE
It is?

DEBORAH JOHNSON (pronounced "De-BOR-ah), a middle-aged Black woman enters. She is decked out in the functional clothing of a small-time sea captain, and reading from a clipboard..

DEBORAH
Attention! Is there a Sunny Nguyen here?

SUNNY
Right here!

DEBORAH
The raffle winner! Sunny, my name is Deborah and I am the captain of the Distant Horizon.

SUNNY
Hello, Captain Deborah!

DEBORAH
Last cruise of the day, looks like it will be just you and me. This way -

SUNNY
No, wait! This lady is coming, too!

DEBORAH
(suspicious)
She is? And what is your name?

JEANINE
Jeanine Adenauer.

DEBORAH
(very suspicious)
So... Jeanine... just decided to go on my boat... just like that...

JEANINE
Yep!

DEBORAH
Then I just have one question, Jeanine...

JEANINE
Yes?

Suddenly DEBORAH turns very harsh, and barks her interrogation at JEANINE.

DEBORAH
Who sent you?!

JEANINE
What?

DEBORAH
Who do you work for?

JEANINE
That's two questions!

DEBORAH tries to calm herself down, realizing she might look a bit insane.

DEBORAH
I'm sorry! Sorry. I just gotta be... careful... Gotta watch out for... terrorists! 9/11! Well, all aboard!

DEBORAH pulls herself together, exits.

SUNNY

Let's go!

JEANINE

Didn't she seem a little, I don't know, tense?

SUNNY

Hey, at least we don't have to take our shoes off like at the airport! Come on! This is going to be fun!

SUNNY gives JEANINE a big hug.

JEANINE

You're hugging me again.

SUNNY

I know! Yee-haw!

SUNNY exits.

JEANINE

I just want some quiet... I don't want to be -

The city sounds rise up again. Amidst the noise a 2-dimensional cut-out of a food truck drives onstage. It has the 'HAGGIS SUSHI" garishly painted across the side.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

OVERSTIMULATED! Hold the boat! I'm coming!

As the JEANINE exits The HAGGIS SUSHIMAN sticks his head out of the window of the truck, addresses the crowd.

HAGGIS SUSHI MAN

Haggis Sushi! San Francisco's newest foodie sensation! From the highlands to the islands, from Scotland to Japan! Its everything you love about sushi - rice, seaweed, and raw fish mixed up with some good Scottish oats and cooked in a sheep's stomach! We've got Nigiri Haggis, California Haggis, we've got Wasabi Haggis - hotter than a Scotsman in a mini-kilt! You can't call yourself a trendy San Franciscan until you've had Haggis Sushi!

HAGGIS SUHSI MAN drives his truck off.

Michael Gene Sullivan as HAGGIS SUSHI MAN Photo by Fletcher Oakes

SCENE 2

The scene has now shifted, and SUNNY, JEANINE and DEBORAH are now on a mid-sized fishing boat with THE DISTANT HORIZON painted on the side. JEANINE and SUNNY are wearing life jackets, DEBORAH is at the wheel. DEBORAH, in the wheelhouse, starts the boat up.

SUNNY is happily snapping pictures with her phone.

SUNNY

Selfie!

SUNNY takes a picture of herself.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

What a warm day on the Bay!

JEANINE

(excited, looking at phone)

My "WhatsTheTemperature" App says it's 67 degrees!

SUNNY

Selfie!

SUNNY takes another picture of herself.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Look at those boats!

JEANINE

(looking at phone)

My WhatKindABoat App says those are yachts!

SUNNY

Selfie!

SUNNY takes another picture of herself.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Isn't it a beautiful day?

JEANINE

(looking at phone)

My IsItABeautifulDay App says... it is a beautiful day!

SUNNY

Double selfie!

SUNNY and JEANINE pose together as they both take a quick series of pictures.

DEBORAH

You two are so busy taking pictures of everything you're not seeing anything!

JEANINE
Anything we don't see now we can transfer to a hard drive later -

SUNNY
And watch on the big screen!

DEBORAH
(pointing to world around)
This is the big screen! It's not gonna get bigger than this!

DEBORAH starts to get get angry again.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
You are enslaved by those little electronic -

DEBORAH tries to calm herself down. She comes out of the wheelhouse.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
(calmly)
Ya know what, let's start again. I'm Captain Deborah -

SUNNY AND JEANINE
(cheerfully)
Hello, Captain Deborah!

DEBORAH
Hi, and welcome to Distant Horizon Tours.

JEANINE and SUNNY take in the beauty for a moment.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
On the starboard side is Treasure Island -

SUNNY and JEANINE take pictures.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
On port side is Angel Island -

SUNNY and JEANINE take pictures

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
And behind us – Pier 39!

SUNNY
Selfie!

SUNNY holds the camera up at an angle that includes DEBORAH.

DEBORAH
(warily)
Are you filming me?

Velina Brown as DEBORAH, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as SUNNY, Lisa Hori-Garcia as JEANINE

JEANINE
It's digital, not film.

DEBORAH suddenly turns aggressive, advancing on SUNNY and JEANINE

DEBORAH
I don't want you filming me! Or recording me! Or writing down anything I say! You got that?

SUNNY AND JEANINE
(frightened)
Yes!

Awkward pause.DEBORAH tries to calm her self down again.

DEBORAH
You know what? Let's start again. Hi, I'm Captain Deborah -

SUNNY and JEANINE
(a little frightened)
Hi, Captain Deborah...

DEBORAH
And welcome to Distant Horizon Tours, On the starboard side... (suddenly) - is that boat following us?

JEANINE
Which boat?

DEBORAH
Don't look!

SUNNY and JEANINE snap to front.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
It's okay, they're just out like us, having a good time...

DEBORAH puts on a big fake smile she waves at other boat.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Hi...

DEBORAH quickly barks at JEANINE and SUNNY

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Wave!

SUNNY and JEANINE obediently wave.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Good... that's good...

All three women are smiling and waving.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
On starboard side is Yerba Buena Island, to the port side are the Marin headlands -

SUNNY
(to DEBORAH)
Are you okay?

DEBORAH
Of course I'm okay. Keep waving!

SUNNY
Because you seem a little paranoid.

DEBORAH
I'm not paranoid! Who told you that? Who have you been talking to? Stop waving!

SUNNY
It's just that you seem so tense and -

SUNNY'S phone alert sounds

SUNNY (CONT'D)
Wait!

SUNNY looks at phone, dials.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Tiffany! Get back inside! I don't want you on drugs and pregnant when I get home!

SUNNY hangs up PHONE.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
So, you are paranoid –

DEBORAH
I'm not paranoid! It's just... being out on the bay - makes me jumpy.

SUNNNY
I thought it was supposed to be relaxing.

DEBORAH
It is! But... in a jumpy sorta way.

DEBORAH returns to wheelhouse.

JEANINE
(pointing)
What's that?

SUNNY
Alcatraz Island!

JEANINE
(speaking into her phone)
"Octopus Tech tell me about: Alcatraz Island."

COMPUTER VOICE
"Alcatraz Island, was a federal prison until 1963, after which it became a peaceful national park -"

DEBORAH
(from the wheelhouse)
What does it say about the occupation?

JEANINE
What occupation?

DEBORAH
Never mind! I didn't say anything!

SUNNY
Yes, you did. You said occupation.

DEBORAH
I know what I said! But I didn't say it.

JEANINE
(reading)
"Alcatraz is a peaceful national park."

DEBORAH
That's what they want you to believe...

SUNNY
Who?

DEBORAH
You know who I'm talkin' about...

SUNNY
No, I don't...

DEBORAH
Yes, you do...

SUNNY
No, I don't...

DEBORAH
Yes, you do...

SUNNY
No. I don't –

DEBORAH
The fascists!

DEBORAH comes out of the wheelhouse.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
I could tell you some real history about all this, but if the fascists heard me they'd have me down in Guantanamo, strapped to a chair, tape over my mouth, leather bag over my head!

SUNNY
(whispers to JEANINE)
Some people in this city are into that...

DEBORAH realizes she's gone too far again, tries to calm down. Again.

DEBORAH
You know what? Let's start again! Hi, my name is Captain Deborah -

JEANINE

But -

DEBORAH

No but! There is no but! We're just going on a nice, normal tour of the bay. Look, Pier 39!

JEANINE

Are you saying you know more than the Octopus Tech database?

DEBORAH

Maybe...

SUNNY

Like what?

DEBORAH

You want to know? You really want to know?

SUNNY AND JEANINE

Yes?

DEBORAH

Good!

DEBORAH points dramatically into the distance.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Alcatraz Island! In 1969 occupied by the United Indians of all Tribes!

SUNNY AND JEANINE

Occupied?

DEBORAH

Way before these youngsters with their Occupy Wall Street was Occupy Alcatraz!

JEANINE

(to her phone)

"Octopus tech please tell me about: Indians, Alcatraz."

COMPUTER VOICE

"I'm sorry Jeanine but no data can be found."

SUNNY

Maybe you should Google it.

JEANINE explodes.

JEANINE

I don't Google! *(calmly)* I only use the Octopus. Our database knows everything.

SUNNY

Then why isn't it in there?

DEBORAH
Because it was thrown down the memory hole by the Thought Police!

SUNNY
Captain Deborah, that's sounds very scary, and -

SUNNY suddenly points behind DEBORAH.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
WHAT'S THAT?

DEBORAH turns to look, and SUNNY quickly snaps a selfie of herself and JEANINE posing in front of Alcatraz.

DEBORAH
Is there a boat following us?

SUNNY
Must have been a mirage!

DEBORAH
Can't be too careful. Used to be a naval base right over there. Tested biological weapons on the whole Bay Area.

SUNNY
Sounds like some old communist propaganda.

JEANINE
(to phone)
"Octopus Tech, please look up: Biological weapons experiments on San Francisco"

COMPUTER VOICE
"I'm sorry Jeanine but no data can be found."

DEBORAH
That's what happens when you rely on some corporation to teach you history. All they gotta do is hit delete!

JEANINE
So what database did you use?

DEBORAH
(pointing at her own head)
This one right here!

JEANINE
But if you use your smart phone -

DEBORAH
I don't have one.

SUNNY and JEANINE
(stunned)
Don't... have... one?

DEBORAH
Electronic chains! Holding you in some secret CIA prison of the mind! With a bag over your head! I don't trust anything that was invented after 1988.

SUNNY and JEANINE
(horrified)
1988!?

DEBORAH
The year they invented cell phones... and Prozac! (pointing) On the port side is the clock tower of the U.C. Berkeley.

SUNNY
Finally, something without politics!

DEBORAH
Birthplace of the Free Speech Movement!

SUNNY
What's next, you're going to tell us some pinko story about the bridges?

DEBORAH
You mean... Harry Bridges?

JEANINE
They don't look hairy.

DEBORAH
Harry R. Bridges - union leader, helped organized the General Strike of 1934!

JEANINE
(to phone)
"Octopus tech please tell me about: Harry Bridges, General Strike 1934".

COMPUTER VOICE
Jeanine, you have a lot of unusual questions today.

JEANINE
(to phone)
Just tell me about Harry Bridges.

COMPUTER VOICE
"Searching: Larry Ridges".

JEANINE
(to phone)
Harry Bridges.

COMPUTER VOICE
"Searching: Fairy Fridges".

JEANINE
(to phone)
Harry Bridges!

COMPUTER VOICE
Searching: "Ruffles have ridges".

JEANINE
(slowly, to phone)
Harry Bridges!

COMPUTER VOICE
"Oh, Harry Bridges!"

JEANINE
(to phone)
Yes!

COMPUTER VOICE
"Sorry no data can be found."

DEBORAH
Harry Bridges! Joined the I.W.W. in 1921 -

JEANINE
I.W.W.?

DEBORAH
Industrial Workers of the World, and -

SUNNY
Don't you talk about anything else but politic on this cruise? I got enough of that from the commies back home in Vietnam.

DEBORAH
You're from Vietnam? Hold up!

DEBORAH goes back in the wheelhouse, stops the boat, then returns to SUNNY.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
On behalf of my country please let me apologize for the destruction we rained on you country, my sister!

SUNNY
Sister?

DEBORAH
The napalm, the carpet bombing - how you must hate us!

SUNNY
I don't hate you.

DEBORAH

Not me – America!

SUNNY

I love America!

DEBORAH

(stunned)

Why?

SUNNY

Because it is... America! The land where dreams come true! And anyone can be Middle Class!

DEBORAH

I thought you worked for a living.

SUNNY

Of course I work! I work very hard.

DEBORAH

Then you are a worker.

SUNNY

No, I am Middle Class.

DEBORAH

Working Class!

SUNNY

Middle Class!

DEBORAH

Working Class!

SUNNY

Middle Class!

JEANINE

(to DEBORAH)

Just say she's middle class!

DEBORAH

Middle Class is just an invention to get the workers of the world to fight amongst themselves.

SUNNY

More commie propaganda! That is why we had to escape Vietnam!

DEBORAH

Escaped? Oh, I see. Was your daddy CIA? Or did he work for the U.S. Embassy?

SUNNY

My father was a farmer!

DEBORAH
Well, he must have done something!

SUNNY
We had a little plot of land outside of Saigon -

DEBORAH
Ho Chi Minh City -

SUNNY
SAIGON! And we had to leave.

JEANINE
Why?

SUNNY
To escape her Workers of the World!

A fog bank comes in.

The Distant Horizon parts in the middle, and as SUNNY steps through the boat, the scene shifts to a memory. SUNNY opens one of the boxes on the pier, and takes out a puppet version of herself which she manipulates as she tell her story. All the characters in SUNNY's story are represented by puppets manipulated and voiced by the rest of the cast. The entire scene is underscored with stylized Vietnamese puppet theater music, with sections sung.

SCENE 3

SUNNY

Back in our village we were very poor. My father had helped supply food to the American base at Long Binh. After the war, everyone looked at us like we were traitors.

BROTHER PUPPET and large, looming MOTHER PUPPET appear.

Song: "SUNNY'S MEMORY OF HAPPINESS"

SUNNY *(cont'd)*

WE ARE VERY CAREFUL.

TIME GOES BY

I HELP MY MOTHER,

HELP ELDER BROTHER,

FEED THE CHICKENS ON OUR LAND

FOR AWHILE –

WE ARE ALMOST HAPPY.

A soldier PUPPET appears.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*

Then a soldier comes to our village. He has come for my father.

Large, looming FATHER PUPPET appears.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*

My brother says -

BROTHER PUPPET

My father has done nothing wrong. He is good Vietnamese.

Sound of gunshot as Soldier shoots BROTHER PUPPET.

SUNNY

No!

FATHER PUPPET

My son!

SUNNY

The soldier leaves to get reinforcements.

SOLDIER and BROTHER PUPPETS exit.

FATHER PUPPET

Sunny! Gather the other villagers!

SUNNY
Aunties! Uncles! Cousins! We have to leave! And we escape by boat.

VILLAGERS BOAT PUPPET crosses.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
The South China Sea. No more food and water.

Pirate ship PUPPET enters and overtakes VILLAGER'S BOAT PUPPET. Both exit

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
Pirates steal our money.

FATHER PUPPET
Daughter, do not give up hope!

MOTHER PUPPET
Stay strong. We will survive.

FATHER PUPPET
Look! I see land!

MOTHER PUPPET
Hong Kong refugee camp!

SUNNY
Where we wait years and years. Until, one day –

PUPPET Airplane flies on, exits.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
America at last!

ALL
Minnesota!

FATHER PUPPET
You betcha!

SUNNY
Don'tcha know!

PUPPET SNOW enters, and falls on SUNNY and SUNNY PUPPET.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
Oh, snow. Minnesota is not like Vietnam. OhhÉ
(family shivers)

PUPPET SNOW exits.

MOTHER PUPPET
Father and I work all day and night to provide for our family.

FATHER PUPPET
No handouts for us!

SUNNY
I organize some of the other refuge girls. We –

REFUGE GIRLS (stagehands in black) cross with PUPPET GIANT scissors and nail polish. They exit.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
- learn how to cut hair, do nails.

FATHER PUPPET
Think big to succeed and prosper.

SUNNY
Together we rent a chair in a salon.

FATHER PUPPET
Think about your future.

MOTHER
Marry a man who loves you. Really loves you.

SUNNY
I meet the most handsome man, a real American.

GUS PUPPET enters.

GUS PUPPET
(with strong Midwestern accent)
Gus Gustafson here. Gimme a haircut and a manicure. I got an interview with a computer company from California.

SUNNY
California!

GUS PUPPET
You bet! Hey, you're kinda cute...

SUNNY
(to FATHER & MOTHER)
Mommy, Daddy, I'm in love with an American!

MOTHER PUPPET
(happy)
Our daughter is in love with an American!

FATHER PUPPET
(suspicious)
My daughter is in love with an American?

SUNNY
With a computer repairman American!

MOTHER AND FATHER PUPPETS
(very happy)
Computers! Cha ching cha ching cha ching!

SUNNY
Gus and I marry, and move to sunny California.

GUS PUPPET
(unhappily)
Foggy San Francisco.

SUNNY
Sunny.

GUS PUPPET
Foggy.

SUNNY
Sunny!

Velina Brown as DEBORAH, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as SUNNY
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

GUS PUPPET

Foggy!

SUNNY

(crying)

I miss my parents.

GUS PUPPET

Oh Geez!

SUNNY

MY HUSBAND GETS A JOB,

WITH A BIG COMPANY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME

I DON'T HAVE TO WORK.

GUS PUPPET

We borrow money.

SUNNY

BUY A BIG HOUSE –

WE ARE ALMOST HAPPY!

SUNNY *(cont'd)*

And then the most happy day of my life! We have a baby! Tiffany!

SUNNY pulls out small puppet of swaddled baby, attaches it to PUPPET SUNNY.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Like the jewelry store!

MOTHER AND FATHER PUPPETs

(thrilled)

A grandchild!

GUS

(not thrilled)

We borrow money.

SUNNY

Mother and father move in.

MOTHER AND FATHER PUPPET

Hello!

GUS PUPPET

Hello. We borrow money.

MOTHER PUUPET

We help babysit.

GUS PUPPET AND SUNNY

(happily)

Hello!

FATHER PUPPET

Family must always help family.

SUNNY

Gus gets a tip on a good stock to buy.

GUS PUPPET

Puppies.com!

SUNNY

It goes up! We buy a big Beemer.

MOTHER PUPPET

Remember to save a little. You have a child to care for.

SUNNY

Yes, mother.

GUS PUPPET

The stock goes up again!

SUNNY

We take our credit cards. Go to the mall. Gucci!

GUS PUPPET

Armani!

SUNNY

Tiffany's! Like our daughter!

GUS PUPPET

The stock goes up again!

SUNNY

We invest everything we have!

FATHER PUPPET, MOTHER PUPPET AND SUNNY

We love America!

SUNNY

And then - The bubble.

Sound of a bubble bursting

SUNNY, PUPPETS

(stunned)

It... burst.

GUS PUPPET
The stock goes down.

SUNNY, PUPPETS
Ohh –

SUNNY
We lose everything we have. Gus loses his job.

GUS PUPPET
Gosh darnnit!

SUNNY
Bills start piling up. Then, mid-life crisis!

GUS PUPPET
It's not you. It's me.

Sports car PUPPET enters. GUS PUPPET gets in SPORTS CAR PUPPET.

GUS PUPPET
Gonna go play in a band!

GUS PUPPET and sports car PUPPET exit.

SUNNY
Divorce. We sell our house, pay back everything we owe. For a while Gus sends checks every month for child support, then every few months, then not at all. What can I do?

FATHER PUPPET
Daughter, remember – think big.

MOTHER
Cast your net into the wide open sea!

SUNNY
Cast my net É my net? Ohh! Internet!

COMPUTER PUPPET enters. SUNNY feverishly types on its keyboard.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
Small apartment in the Bayview. Downstairs, Miss Ella Sweetwater's House of Beau-tay!

COMPUTER PUPPET exits.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
I take what savings I have, rent the apartment and a chair at Miss Ella's and cut hair, cut hair, cut hair. Miss Ella and her husband Mr. Sweetwater -

MISS ELLA and MR. SWEETWATER puppets pop up.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
Are ... sweet! Every month, every year I save...

MOTHER PUPPET
Save for your daughter, Tiffany.

FATHER PUPPET
Save for your own business to take care of Tiffany.

SUNNY
I will, I will. Then mother dies...

MOTHER PUPPET goes away.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
Father dies...

FATHER PUPPET goes away.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
I have just enough to bury them. I am so sad. I take care of Tiffany. I work. And I save. Then Miss Ella dies.

MISS ELLA PUPPET exits

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
I am sad again. And I worry that the salon will close, and I will be out of work again. But kind Mr. Sweetwater asks if I would like to buy the business! I have saved enough money.

SUNNY PUPPET bows to MR. SWEETWATER PUPPET. MR. SWEETWATER PUPPET exits.

SUNNY *(cont't)*

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET,

IN AMERICA.

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET,

A CHANCE.

WE HAVE SAVED, WORKED HARD,

LEARNED NEW WAYS

AND NOW –

WE ARE HAPPY.

JEANINE and DEBORA enter, as the Distant Horizon reforms around them.

SUNNY *(cont't)*
Grand opening! Sunny's Beautiful House of Beau-tay.!

SUNNY lovingly puts SUNNY PUPPET away.

SUNNY *(cont'd)*
I love America! Here we are all safe and sound. And we are happy! I love my country! I love it because... because -

Alert sound from SUNNY's purse. She pulls out phone, looks at it, then dials.

SCENE 4

SUNNY
(on phone)
Tiffany... I told you not to talk to that boy any more! Because you're talking to him right now! Never mind how I know! Tiffany? Tiffany!!

SUNNY looks at her phone.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
She... hung up on me!

SUNNY dials, gets beeping dial tone, looks at phone distressed.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
(hurt)
She... she blocked me! Well then, I am going to erase him from her contacts!

SUNNY angrily typing in information on phone.

DEBORAH
(to JEANINE)
She can do that?

SUNNY
(typing)
And erase all of his past emails -

JEANINE
If you have the right app you can do anything!

SUNNY
(typing)
And all of his texts!

DEBORAH
What kind of app would let you do that?

SUNNY
(beaming)
S.U.S.I!

DEBORAH
S.U.S.I?

SUNNY
The Support Utility for Special Individuals! Now I always know where my daughter is, and who she's talking to. I can look through her emails and texts, and if I don't like what I see I can delete them before she reads them. I can even turn on the camera and see what she's doing!

DEBORAH
She let you put that on her phone?

SUNNY
The S.U.S.I app let me log onto her phone and install it remotely, without her even knowing!

DEBORAH
That's horrible!

SUNNY
That's the price she has to pay for freedom! I just wish I knew who invented S.U.S.I. so I could say thank you!

JEANINE
You're welcome.

DEBORAH AND SUUNY
What?

JEANINE
I created her. I created S.U.S.I.

SUNNY
You did? You are my hero!

SUNNY hugs JEANINE.

JEANINE
Hugging!

SUNNY
I know!

DEBORAH
(horrified)
You made that thing?

JEANINE
Yes!

DEBORAH
Then you are a tool totalitarianism!

SUNNY
What?

JEANINE
Who?

DeBORAH
You.

JEANINE
Me?

DEBORAH
Yes! And I should throw you overboard!

JEANINE
Why?

DEBORAH
For helping the pigs spy on us!

JEANINE
It's not spying!

SUNNY
It's love!

DEBORAH
It's the crypto-fascistic, surveillance-ocracy!

JEANINE
Overstimulated! Overstimulated!

SUNNY
You can't throw her overboard!

DEBORAH
You're right. You'd be a witness. I'd have to throw you overboard first...

DEBORAH chases JEANINE and SUNNY around the deck of the boat.

JEANINE
I'm not part of the tripped out-sadistic, sur... whatever you said!

DEBORAH
Then what are you?

JEANINE
I'm just a girl who wanted to keep an eye on her grandmother!

DEBORAH
Why?

JEANINE
To keep track of her!

SUNNY
Who?

JEANINE
My grandma, Susie!

DEBORAH
Why?

JEANINE

We had to protect her!

DEBORAH AND SUNNY

From who?

JEANINE

From herself!

DEBORAH and SUNNY stop.

JEANINE (CONT'D)

She was getting old...

Fog rolls in, as The Distant Horizon opens again, as JEANINE's world swirls on. DEBORAH and SUNNY change costumes: DEBORAH into MAMA, SUNNY into GRANNY. JEANINE steps onto the pier as her family home takes shape around her.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

It was getting difficult... we didn't know what to do...

SCENE 5

The music and style shift to that of a traditional American melodrama. JEANNE's memory is completely underscored with old-timey piano, and the acting style is the large, melodramatic style of late the 1800's.

JEANINE

I'm from a quiet little town - Elwood, Nebraska. Folks in the big city think it's the middle of nowhere, but it's my home. Grandma Susie was spending a lot of time alone –

GRANNY

I'm so lonely!

JEANINE

My Mother was working overtime at the hardware store –

MAMA

Well, I'm off to work.

MAMA wearily exits.

JEANINE

And I was two hours away at college, studying computer sciences.. We had no idea what Grandma had been up to, until one Christmas break I came home for a week and...

Doorbell rings. JEANINE opens door, Winter winds blow in as a MAIL CARRIER enters with a package. The MAIL CARRIER has the physicality and demeanor of a traditional melodrama hero. (Note: each time the door is opened there is a wind sound effect, and all the actors melodramatically lean as if hit by a blast of wind.)

MAIL CARRIER

Package for Mrs. Susie Winthrop!

GRANNY takes package, MAIL CARRIER exits, GRANNY closes door.

GRANNY

(gleefully)

An apple slicer! Well, isn't that the niftiest thing!

MAMA enters.

MAMA

Mother, we already have two of those!

MAMA takes box exits. Doorbell rings. GRANNY opens door, MAIL CARRIER enters with another package.

MAIL CARRIER
Package for Mrs. Susie Winthrop!

GRANNY takes package, MAIL CARRIER exits, GRANNY closes door.

GRANNY
The robot vacuum cleaner!

MAMA
Mother, please!

MAMA takes box away. Doorbell rings. GRANNY opens door, MAIL CARRIER enters with another package.

GRANNY
Ginzu Steak Knives!

GRANNY takes package, MAIL CARRIER exits, GRANNY closes door.

MAMA takes package away. Doorbell rings. GRANNY opens door. MAIL CARRIER has multiple packages, hands each to GRANNY.

GRANNY *(cont'd)*
A pickle maker! A laminating machine! A scale model of the White House!

MAMA
Mother!

GRANNY
A home gym!

MAMA
Oh Mother....

MAIL CARRIER
And... a letter for Mrs. Susie Winthrop!

GRANNY
(to MAMA)
Can you get that for me dear? My hands are full... of happiness!

MAMA takes letter, closes door. MAIL CARRIER exits. Music shifts to melodramatic suspense.

MAMA
Oh no!

JEANINE
What is it?

MAMA
It's from the credit card company. If we don't pay off this extremely overdue bill... they'll take us to court!

Melodramatic sting!

MAMA (CONT'D)
Get a lien on the house!

Melodramatic sting!

MAMA (CONT'D)
And we'll be out on the streets!

Melodramatic sting as MAMA collapses onto a box.

MAMA (CONT'D)
What shall we do?

JEANINE
I've got to think. For every P, there's an S.

MAMA
There's what for a what?

JEANINE
(thinking)
Problem - solution - problem - solution. Granny, we've got to take control of your finances RTVS!

GRANNY
RT-

JEANINE
Right this very second!

GRANNY
I am not a child!

Doorbell rings. GRANNY opens door. MAIL CARRIER enters with huge box.

MAIL CARRIER
Doll house delivery for Mrs. Susie Winthrop!

GRANNY takes package, joyfully exits.

GRANNY
Yea!

MAMA
Oh, Mother!

MAMA and MAIL CARRIER exit.

JEANINE
I was asleep in my bed that night, dreaming of ways to get Grandma Susie to give up her credit card, when -

MAMA dramatically sweeps in. More melodramatic suspense music!

MAMA
Jeanine!

JEANINE
(surprised)
Who what where when why?

MAMA
It's your grandmother Susie!

MAMA (CONT'D)
She's missing! She's out there in the snow! She won't last thirty minutes in this cold. We've got to go after her!

As MAMA starts to the door she is interrupted by an offstage voice.

MAIL CARRIER(off stage)
Widow Adenauer!

MAMA
Oh no! She's dead! I knew it! She's dead!

MAMA dramatically falls into a near faint.

MAIL CARRIER
Jeanine!

JEANINE opens door. MAIL CARRIER enters with GRANNY

MAIL CARRIER(CONT'D)
I've got Mrs. Winthrop right here!

Triumphant music as GRANNY is lifted into room and walks crosses to MAMA.

MAMA
(to MAIL CARRIER)
Stanley!

MAIL CARRIER heroically crosses into room.

MAMA (CONT'D)
How can I ever thank you?

MAIL CARRIER
(flirtatious)
Well, I can think of a few ways...

MAMA
Hush! (to GRANNY) Oh Mother, we were so worried...

GRANNY
Oh, don't get your panties in a wad - I just stepped out for a breath of air.

MAIL CARRIER
Just stepped out? Ma'am, you were halfway to Curtis City when I caught up to you. If I hadn't of been coming back from my bi-weekly strip-poker game,

MAIL CARRIER winks at MAMA, who demurs.

MAIL CARRIER (CONT'D)
Who knows what would've happened!

MAMA
Thank you!

MAIL CARRIER
(super heroically)
That's okay, Ma'm - it's all part of being... A Letter carrier!

JEANINE opens door, MAIL CARRIER exits. JEANINE closes door.

MAMA
(to GRANNY)
Halfway to Curtis! And in your slippers!

JEANINE
You could've gotten frostbite!

MAMA
You could've been attacked by a mad cow!

JEANINE
You could've D.O.H.ed!

MAMA AND GRANNY
Doh'ed?

JEANINE
Died of hypothermia!

MAMA
The point is, if it wasn't for Stanley, and his strip poker – you'd be gone!

GRANNY
A person can't go for a little walk around here without it turning into a national emergency!

GRANNY walks off, muttering.

MAMA
Oh ,Jeanine, whatever will I do when you go back to school? How'm I supposed to go to work knowing your grandmother could be wandering all over creation?

JEANINE
I can fix this, I know I can.

JEANINE starts pacing.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
Problem - solution, problem - solution. It's an S.M.O.P.!

Mama
Smop?!

Jeanine
A small matter of programming!

Mama
I know you'll think of something, pumpkin.

MAMA exits.

Song: "PROBLEM/SOLUTION"

JEANINE

THERE'S SOMETHING IN MY BRAIN

THAT TAKES ME OVER, I CAN GO FOR DAYS

WITHOUT A WINK OF SLEEP OR EVEN EATING,

WHEN I FIND I'M UP AGAINST

A PROBLEMATIC CIRCUMSTANCE

A RHYTHM IN MY HEAD STARTS BEATING.

THINKING, THINKING, THINKING, THINKING,

THEORIZING, ANALYZING

ESTIMATING, CALCULATING

COGITATING, SPECULATING

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

GRANNY enters, begins watching television.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

THE PROBLEM IS MY DARLING GRANDMA S.U.S.I.

WHOSE PURCHASES ARE ANYTHING BUT CHOOSY.

TELEVISION VOICEOVER
The guitar, the songbook, and the singalong CD can be yours for just $39.99!

GRANNY
Oooh!

JEANINE

SOLUTION WOULD ARRIVE AT WAYS

TO CANCEL OUT BEFORE SHE PAYS

SOMETHING THAT WOULD SIGNAL US

WHEN SHE'S UP TO BUYING STUFF!

JEANINE pulls out a smartphone, and a lanyard.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
Look, Grandma Susie... we got you your own phone!

GRANNY
Oh, goody!

JEANINE gives phone to GRANNY.

JEANINE
Just make sure to keep it with you, and use it to make all your orders.

GRANNY
Okay, sweetie!

JEANINE

INTERRUPT THE JAVA SCRIPT

AND FIND A WAY TO RE-DIRECT

AND NOTIFY THE ONLINE VENDOR

TO CUT IT OUT WITH ALL THE CRAP THEY SEND HER!

Alert sound. MAMA enters with matching smartphone..

JEANINE (CONT'D)
(pressing button)
Jeanine, you're a miracle worker. Sixteen purchases made and canceled in the last two days. And she doesn't even notice.

GRANNY keeps ordering things and MAMA keeps canceling them.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

PROBLEM? SOLUTION!

GRANNY starts toward front door.

GRANNY
I think I'll just go for a little walk.

JEANINE

THE PROBLEM IS HER TENDENCY TO

WANDER,

WITH NOTHING BUT A SMILE AND A HOUSECOAT

ON HER

SOLUTION WOULD ADDRESS THE FACT

WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE GRANNY'S AT

SOMETHING THAT WOULD SECRETLY ALERT US

BEFORE SHE'S ON HER MERRY WAY TO CURTIS!

JEANINE *(cont'd)*
Grandma Susie, wait. Let me see your phone for a moment.

JEANINE fiddles with GRANNY'S phone for a moment, after which GRANNY continues on her way to the front door.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*

THE OBVIOUS SOLUTION TO HER RANDOM

EXPLORATION

WOULD BE SIGNAL GENERATION

WITH COORDINATE CONFIGURATION!

AN AVATAR TO PLAINLY SHOW

(SO MOM AND I WILL ALWAYS KNOW)

GRANNY'S A-OK, NOT DOA...

FROM DOH'ING IN THE SNOW!

Alert sound! MAMA sweeps on, intercepts GRANNY before she reaches the front door.

MAMA
Too late for a walk now, Mother! Let's wait till it's light outside.

MAMA escorts GRANNY off.

JEANINE

THINKING, THINKING, THINKING, THINKING,

THEORIZING, ANALYZING

ESTIMATING, CALCULATING

TESTING AND ELIMINATING

ALL THE BUGS AND QUIRKS

AND MAKING SURE THE DARN THING WORKS!

JEANINE *(cont'd)*
And it did! And as word spread, other folks from the neighborhood began showing up on our doorstep.

NEIGHBOR #3 *(off stage)*
Could I get one of those for my uncle?

NEIGHBOR #2 *(off stage)*
I could use one of them for my kid!

NEIGHBOR #1 *(off stage)*
I could use one of those for my wife!

JEANINE
Soon requests started coming in online. It was amazing! Then, one day, when I was home on spring break, I was on my tablet and a message appeared in my in-box...

JEANINE clicks to open the message, and upstage a dancing OCTOPUS appears.

OCTOPUS
Congratulations! (voice becomes highly computerized when pronouncing her name) JEANINE! HILDEGARD! ADENAUER! Octopus Technology has selected your app, for entry into our HFACC!

JEANINE
Hot Fresh Apps Coders Competition!

OCTOPUS
Enter your original app for an opportunity to win a vast array of prizes and -

JEANINE
And?

OCTOPUS
And - a super special secret grand prize!

JEANINE
OMG, Octopus Tech! They're, like, my heroes. They created all my favorite apps - "Your Virtual Pet," "Your Virtual Best Friend," "Your Virtual Long-Term Relationship with Two Virtual Weeks-A-Year in Virtual Hawaii!" Oh wow. Wow. Okay. Breathe, Jeanine. You can do this. (reading) Name: (types) Jeanine Hildegard Adenauer. (reading) College: (types) Metropolitan Community College

GRANNY enters, with a cup of cocoa and a plate with a cookie on it.

JEANINE *(cont'd)*
(reads)
Name of App. Name of App...

JEANINE types

JEANINE *(cont'd)*
"App to stop your Granny from wandering away and freezing to death and also from buying too much stuff and ruining your life and also-"

OCTOPUS
Error! Error! Too many characters in name! Please rename your app.

JEANINE
Name of App... Name of App...

GRANNY
Here's your hot cocoa.

JEANINE
Thank you!

GRANNY
Would you like a cookie, honey?

JEANINE
Thank you Grandma Susie!

GRANNY gives jeanine cocoa and cookie, exits

JEANINE (CONT'D)
(suddenly inspired)
SUSI...(types) SUSI: Support Utility for Special Individuals. (reads) Purpose of App: (thinks for a moment, then types) Safeguarding your loved ones. (JEANINE types furiously for several seconds, then) Attach. Send.

Pause.... then alert sounds!

OCTOPUS
Congratulations, JEANINE! HILDEGARD! ADENAUER! You are the winner of the Octopus Tech: HFACC!

JEANINE
I won?

OCTOPUS
You won!

JEANINE
I won?

OCTOPUS
You won!

JEANINE
I won?

OCTOPUS
Can we move on, please?

JEANINE
Yes.

OCTOPUS
As winner of the HFACC, you will receive the following: $500 in cash!

JEANINE
$500 in cash!

OCTOPUS
A new toaster oven.

JEANINE
A new toaster oven!

OCTOPUS
And...

JEANINE
And?

Michael Gene Sullivan as OCTOPUS, Lisa Hori-Garcia as JEANINE
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

OCTOPUS
And... the super special grand prize - a job at Octopus Tech!

JEANINE
A job!

The OCTOPUS sweeps down to JEANINE.

OCTOPUS
You will be whisked away to beautiful Silicon Valley, where you will develop your software in our modern, open space offices, and where you will be able to mingle with you fellow designers -

JEANINE
No!

OCTOPUS
What?

JEANINE
I can't work in open space! I get OVERSTIMULATED! Can't I have some small space to call my own?

OCTOPUS
You mean... like a cubicle?

JEANINE
A cubicle. That sounds wonderful!

OCTOPUS
Whatever you want, Jeanine. We are here to make your dreams come true!

JEANINE
My dreams come true?

Song: "A DREAM COME TRUE"

OCTOPUS

ONCE YOU MAKE OCTOPUS TECH YOUR HOME

YOU'LL BE GIVEN YOUR VERY OWN CUBICLE...

JEANINE
Really?

OCTOPUS

SHELTERED FROM SOUND, SHIELDED FROM VIEW,

YOU CAN CODE DAY AND NIGHT

IN COMPLETE SOLITUDE,

WITH NO ONE AND NOTHING TO AGGRAVATE YOU –

JEANINE

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE!

OCTOPUS AND JEANINE

A DREAM COME TRUE!

OCTOPUS

ONCE YOU MAKE OCTOPUS TECH YOUR HOME

YOU WILL WORK IN THE PLEASURE OF PRIVACY,

JEANINE

I love privacy!

OCTOPUS

NO FORCED OFFICE PARTIES

WITH AWKWARD CHIT-CHAT.

YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS TO SOLVE,

WE APPRECIATE THAT!

JUST DAY AFTER DAY IN A DULL HABITAT –

JEANINE

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE!

OCTOPUS AND JEANINE

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE!

OCTOPUS

SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO VENTURE

DOWN THE HALL,

JEANINE

I guess I can do that.

OCTOPUS

YOU'LL FIND A GOLDEN SPIGOT ON OUR WALL!

SERVING OUR HIGH-PROTEIN ENERGY DRINK

MADE WITH CHROMIUM PALMITATE,

FREON AND ZINC

NO NEED TO EAT! MORE TIME TO THINK!

IN THIS A.R.E -

JEANINE

An acronym-rich environment!

JEANINE AND OCTOPUS

IT'S A D.C.T!

OCTOPUS

ONCE YOU MAKE OCTOPUS TECH YOUR HOME

YOU'LL BE BUILDING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW -

ADDING YOUR ZING TO THE GREAT THINGS WE DO,

ALL THIS AND MORE WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU –

The OCTOPUS sudden produces a large contract,

OCTOPUS (CONT'D)

JUST INITIAL YOUR CONTRACT ON PAGE 102...

JEANINE signs.

JEANINE

It's a dream come true!

OCTOPUS

AND THEN AGAIN, ON PAGE 204...

JEANINE

But of course!

JEANINE signs again.

OCTOPUS

THEN SIGN AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 403...

JEANINE signs again.

JEANINE

IT'S A DCT!

OCTOPUS AND JEANINE

A DCT!

A DREAM COME TRUE!

OCTOPUS exits.

JEANINE

And it was exactly like he said it would be: I work as much as I want, and no one bothers me; I'll get my family out of debt; and on top of all that, I'm helping people!

Melodramatic world fades as JEANINE re-enters the present. The Distant Horizon reforms around the three women.

SCENE 6

SUNNY
(to DEBORAH)
See? She is a good person!

DEBORAH
She's the devil.

JEANINE
I found a need and filled it! What's wrong with that?

SUNNY
It's the American way!

JEANINE
Rubin's Rule #17:
"If you need something that hasn't been made
Invent it yourself, don't be afraid!"

DEBORAH
Does Rubin always talk in rhyme?

JEANINE
Only when he's being inspiring.
"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, or less.
Teach a man to fish, and you have created a competitor for your own fishing busi - ness!"

DEBORAH
Sounds like just another Ayn Randian reactionary who doesn't care about helping people!

JEANINE
Rubin's Rule #19:
"If everyone looks after themselves, everyone will be looked after!"

SUNNY
That one didn't rhyme.

JEANINE
He's still beta testing it.

DEBORAH
Hey, I got a rule:
"If you quote one more thing Rubin likes to say,
I will throw your libertarian butt right in the Bay!"

JEANINE, frightened, frantically paces as she tries to exit the boat.

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

SUNNY
That's why there is no one else on this tour - you make people feel bad!

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

DEBORAH
If they feel bad it's not me - it's America!

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

SUNNY
Why are you so angry?

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

DEBORAH
I'm not angry, I'm righteous!

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

SUNNY
Well it looks the same!

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

DEBORAH
People like her are helping the capitalists enslave us!

JEANINE
Overstimulated...Overstimulated...

SUNNY
We're not slaves!

DEBORAH AND SUNNY
(to JEANINE)
Stop saying that!

JEANINE
(to DEBORAH)
I haven't done anything to you!

DEBORAH
You ruined my life!

SUNNY
How did she ruin your life?

DEBORAH
People like her - in their suits, with their desks, always following orders, agents of the police state - the Establishment! They took away my Marius! (pronounced "Mar-EYE-us")

DEBORAH relents, overcome by her broken heart.

SUNNY
Who the heck is Marius?

DEBORAH
Never mind!

JEANINE
You were going to throw me overboard because of someone I never heard of?

DEBORAH
You would have heard of him - if the pigs hadn't taken him from me!

SUNNY
Lemme guess - another commie.

DEBORAH
He wasn't a communist. But he was a revolutionary!

JEANINE
Is he dead?

DEBORAH
I don't know! One day he was there, and then they just made him disappear!

JEANINE
I am not they!

DEBORAH
Yes, you are! You are they!

SUNNY
When did all this happen?

DEBORAH
A long time ago. Back when San Francisco was San Francisco! We didn't invent expensive gadgets to enslave ourselves! We fought for freedom! Free Mumia! Free Leonard Peltier!

JEANINE AND SUNNY
Who?

DEBORAH
(screaming in frustration)
Argh!

The Distant Horizon splits open again, and the fog rolls in as scene shifts to DEBORAH's flashback.

JEANINE
Sunny, is it always this foggy out on the bay?

SUNNY
How should I know? I live on the other side of town.

SCENE 7

The music shifts to mid-seventies funk as DEBORAH sheds her baggy work clothes, revealing a younger, hipper, big Afro wearing, hotter version of herself.

DEBORAH

It's 1977. Yay! I am a marine biology major at San Francisco State University, on my way to a career in environmental science. My Dad had been a big time fisherman, and when he and Mom passed away they left me their boat - The Distant Horizon. I was going to spend my life at sea, exploring uncharted oceans, categorizing undiscovered species! Playing with the dolphin! But then one day in class -

MARIUS, also in Seventies gear, and with a large Afro, enters, talking as if to teacher. SUNNY and JEANINE watch as if they were students.

MARIUS

(as if to unseen teacher)

But what are we going to do about it?

DEBORAH

This self-righteous loudmouth interrupted the teacher!

MARIUS

It's one thing for us to talk about pollution, but why aren't we talking about the cause?

DEBORAH raise her hand.

DEBORAH

Excuse me Marius - (pronounced "MARRY-us")

MARIUS

It's pronounced Mar-EYE-us.

DEBORAH

Mar-eye-us... I think what Professor Smith is saying is if we all see ourselves as part of nature -

MARIUS

Then we can be exploited like every other natural resource!

DEBORAH

Exploited? By who?

MARIUS

You know who I'm talking about-

DEBORAH

No, I don't -

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as SUNNY, Velina Brown as DEBORAH
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

MARIUS

Yes, you do -

DEBORAH

No I don't!

MARIUS

The Capitalists! They are the ones ruining the planet! Cutting down forests, strip mining mountains, sucking oil wells dry! We have got to stop all this Capitalist cutting and stripping and sucking! And we have got to stop it - (dramatically removes his sunglasses, raises fist) by any means necessary!

DEBORAH

He was a poly-sci major and every Tuesday and Thursday he stood up and started talking.

MARIUS

(again as if to class)

You cannot talk about environmentalism -

DEBORAH

And talking...

MARIUS

Without addressing the class struggle!

DEBORAH

Class struggle? But in America everyone is Middle Class!

SUNNY

You see? I told her!

MARIUS

Middle Class is just an invention to get the workers of the world to fight amongst ourselves! It's like they hypnotized us into believing that being a worker is something to be ashamed of! Well, it is time for us to (snaps fingers in DEBORAH's face) wake up! It is time to break the spell of Capitalism - (dramatically removes his sunglasses, raises fist) by any means necessary!

DEBORAH

(to audience)

He was like a broken LP-

JEANINE

What's an LP?

SUNNY

It's like a big CD...

MARIUS

Now I'm not saying we should tear the whole country down. But you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs. So if we want to taste the omelette of

liberty we have got to scramble the eggs of Capitalism in the frying pan of freedom, and we have got to scramble them -

DEBORAH
(to audience)
Wait for it...

MARIUS
(dramatically removes his sunglasses, raises fist) By any means necessary!

DEBORAH
(to audience)
He was infuriating! He was annoying! And he was so... hot!

JEANINE and SUNNY exit.

MARIUS
(flirtatious)
Deborah...(pronounced De-BOR-ah) it is Deborah, isn't it?

DEBORAH
No, it's Deb-orah... *(pronounced "DEB-ra')*

MARIUS
That's too bad. De-bor-ah sounds so much, I don't know... earthier. I notice you have a lot to say in class -

DEBORAH
I have a lot to say?

MARIUS
And I like that. Listen... there's a U.S. out of El Salvador/England out of Ireland! rally this Saturday night. I was wondering if you might want to check it out...

DEBORAH
I don't know...

MARIUS
(flirtatiously)
...With me.

DEBORAH
Really? (to audience) Now, I was not political. But that Saturday everyone was so passionate! And after the rally, back at Marius' apartment, we talked and talked... Well, mainly he talked.

MARIUS
What kind of world are we going to leave our children?

DEBORAH
(suggestively)
Our... children?

MARIUS
(embarrassed)
Not ours! You know, I mean... children in general!

DEBORAH
Oh...

MARIUS
We gotta do something. We gotta be willing to put our bodies on the line -

DEBORAH
(getting aroused)
The way he said "our bodies" that made me want to get all political right then and there!

MARIUS
(passionately)
Are we going to be the generation that's remembered for just reaching out and grabbing whatever was right in front of us?

DEBORAH
Gee, I don't know...

MARIUS
For just taking whatever we wanted, over and over... and over again?

DEBORAH
Well -

MARIUS
For just screwing people 'til they can't take it anymore!

DEBORAH
(ecstatically)
Yes!

MARIUS
What?

Pulling him down on the couch.

DEBORAH
By any means necessary!

They kiss, as the music get extra funky.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
And after that night, I saw school a little differently...

JEANINE dressed as student Amber and SUNNY dressed as another student, Marcie, enter.

AMBER
Debra, you have lost your mind!

MARCIE
It's just a phase...

DEBORAH
(much funkier)
The only reason to study America is to learn how to overthrow it!

AMBER
What about the environment?

DEBORAH
There isn't going to be any environment when the Capitalists get through with it! That is why we have to stop them - by any means necessary.

MARCIE
This is all because of that boy, Mary-us.

DEBORAH
It's pronounced Mar-EYE-us.

AMBER
Listen, Debra -

DEBORAH
It's pronounced De-BOR-ah.

MARCIE
No, it's pronounced "cuh-RAY-zee!" You and this boy are going to save the world? How?

AMBER
And don't say -

MARCIE AND AMBER
"By any means necessary!"

DEBORAH
I don't have to. You said it for me.

MARCIE AND amber
We give up!

AMBER and MARCIE exit.

Michael Gene Sullivan as MARIUS Photo by Fletcher Oakes

DEBORAH
(to audience)
It was an amazing time! The Vietnamese had just kicked American Imperialism in the ass – Pow! Nixon was out – Zap! The CIA had been exposed as the assassins they are – Hi-yaaah! And every day people were in the streets! It wasn't the 60's, but it was good enough! We rented a little apartment in the Bayview. During the daytime I made money taking tourists out on the bay, on The Distant Horizon. Marius worked on the docks. But at night? At night -

MARIUS enters.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
We were part of –

JEANINE and SUNNY enter as two revolutionaries, DENNIS (SUNNY) and Carla (JEANINE). They are arguing loudly.

DENNIS
You can't just blow things up!

DEBORAH
The Red Tide Collective!

CARLA
Is this a war or isn't it?

DENNIS
But you can't just blow things up!

CARLA
Is this a war or isn't it?

DENNIS
But you can't just go around blowing things up!

CARLA
So the fascists get bombs, and what do we get? Meetings!

DENNIS
Carla -

CARLA
They overthrow a president, we have a meeting -

DENNIS
Carla -

CARLA
Undermine democracy, Economic imperialism, Death squads - we'll have a meeting! (dismissively) Maybe start a petition.

DENNIS
Carla -

CARLA
Is this a war or isn't it?

DEBORAH
It's a war!

MARIUS
(super dramatically)
And we... have got to win it!

DENNIS
Carla wants to take on the navy.

CARLA
They are shipping weapons to the contras from Alameda naval base!

DENNIS
So naturally she wants to bomb them.

MARIUS
We'd never get close enough, unless... wait! Do we have a torpedo?

DEBORAH
No...

MARIUS
Damn! That would have shown the capitalist war machine that there were some serious revolutionaries on the scene!

CARLA
We got to do something!

DENNIS
A march down Market Street!

CARLA
What's that gonna do? The Navy is in the bay!

DENNIS
How about a rally?

CARLA
Where we all talk about how mad we are, but afterwards nothing changes!

DENNIS
We could... have a meeting!

CARLA
Oh shut up!

DEBORAH
(struck with an inspiration)
The Distant Horizon!

MARIUS
What?

DEBORAH
Daddy's boat!

DENNIS
What about it?

DEBORAH
We could take it out on the water, get in the way of some of those navy ships-

CARLA
A blockade!

DENNIS
A what?

CARLA
It's like an aquatic picket line!

DENNIS
We'll take the protest to them!

DEBORAH
Yeah! Let's do it!

DEBORAH, CARLA, and DENNIS turn to MARIUS, waiting for an endorsement.

MARIUS
(dramatically removes his sunglasses, raises fist) Let's do it!

A banner is hung: ***"U.S. Out of Central America".***

DEBORAH
(to audience)
Turned out we weren't the only ones with that idea. Lotsa folks wanted to stand up to what our government was doing. The Peace Navy, that's what it was called. You should have seen us! Surrounding the navy ships - blowing horns, ringing bells, singing songs, letting them know that at least this place, here, we were still willing to stand up to them! It was... glorious!

ALL cheer as if part of the protest.

Song: "WE'RE ALMOST THERE".

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

WE TURNED THE TIDE,

IN THE PUBLIC MIND.

WITH A SWEET BLOCKADE,

OUR WET PARADE!

RAISED OUR VOICE,

STOPPED A WAR,

BEFORE IT COULD GET STARTED

IN EL SALVADOR!

WE STOOD UP ON OUR FEET,

WE GOT OUT IN THE STREETS,

TOLD OUR TRUTH, SPREAD THE WORD

FROM BAYVIEW TO JOHANNESBURG!

DON'T LET UP!

DON'T GET SCARED!

DON'T LET GO, –

FOR ALL WE KNOW

WE'RE ALMOST THERE...

SUPERHEROES,

DON'T NEED NO CAPES!

HEROES MARCH IN PICKET LINES

WITH THE ONES WHO PICK OUR GRAPES.

HEROES STARE DOWN RIFLES,

LIE IN FRONT OF TRAINS,

WE'RE PROUD TOGETHER, LOUD TOGETHER

JOINED IN A HUMAN CHAIN!

ALL

THIS CROWD WILL NOT DISBURSE!

THIS CROWD WILL NOT DISBURSE!

DEBORAH

'TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST –

ALL

'TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST!

DEBORAH

’TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST –

ALL

’TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST!

DEBORAH

DON'T LET UP!

DON'T GET SCARED!

DON'T LET GO,

FOR ALL WE KNOW –

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

ALL

‘TILL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST –

DEBORAH

WE'RE ALMOST THERE –

ALL

‘TILL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST –

DEBORAH

WE'RE ALMOST THERE –

ALL

‘TILL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST –

DEBORAH

WE'RE ALMOST THERE –

ALL

‘TILL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST!

All end with their fists raised in triumph. CARLA, DENNIS, and MARIUS exit.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

San Francisco was the revolutionary capital of the United States, and we were waking up the rest of the country! But I guess the Capitalists were waking up, too -

MARIUS enters, clearly worried and slightly frightened.

MARIUS

Deborah, did you hear?

DEBORAH

Hear what?

MARIUS

You know Judy Bari -

DEBORAH

From Earth First. Yeah, I know her.

MARIUS turns on "television."

News announcer VOICEOVER

And in local news self-proclaimed activist and apparent eco-terrorist Judi Bari was almost killed this evening when a bomb went off in her car. Police are investigating, but sources inside the department indicate the bomb may have been made by Bari, who was transporting it to some unknown location...

MARIUS turns the television off.

DEBORAH
But... Judi wouldn't do that! She's non-violent!

MARIUS
I know...

DEBORAH
We... we gotta do something!

MARIUS
Yeah...

DEBORAH
We gotta organize her defense -

MARIUS
Carla was right, this is a war. And they're gonna kill us...

DEBORAH
What?

MARIUS
They're gonna kill every single one of us!

DEBORAH
But they couldn't get away with that!

MARIUS
They got away with it before! Malcom, Martin... and now the press is saying Judi blew herself up?

DEBORAH
We could go underground for a while-

MARIUS
I gotta think about this...

DEBORAH
I'll call Carla and Dennis -

MARIUS
Call... yeah... call them. No! Wait... can't trust the phones... probably tapped!

DEBORAH
Tapped?

MARIUS
I better go... go and get them... talk to them face to face... only way to be sure. You stay here.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
See you soon...

MARIUS begins to leave.

DEBORAH

Wait!

DEBORAH rushes to MARIUS, and gives him a passionate kiss as JEANINE and SUNNY enter. MARIUS exits as the fog returns and as DEBORAH changes costume back to her modern, baggy self.

SCENE 8

ON THE DISTANT HORIZON.

DEBORAH
And that was it. He walked out the door, and none of us saw him again. I don't know if he was killed, or if he's in some prison somewhere. He was just... disappeared. Then I lost my place in the Bayview - landlord sold it to some couple wanted to open a beauty salon. And I ended up here.

JEANINE
You live on this boat?

DEBORAH
Nowhere else to go. But I never stopped looking for my Marius. I even filed a Freedom of Information request with the F.B.I. But they said they had nothing. Liars. All these years, looking... And now...

DEBORAH turns on JEANINE.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Who do I find in my boat but an servant of the very police state that took my Marius!

JEANINE
But I wasn't even born yet!

DEBORAH
That's no excuse!

SUNNY
Captain Deborah, I am sorry for you, but that is the past, and this is today! Look at what we have! The air is clean, the water is clean, the President is black, and everyone is middle class!

DEBORAH
Working class!

SUNNY
MIDDLE CLASS!

DEBORAH
WORKING CLASS!

SUNNY
That is your problem, that you never believed in Middle Class America! People like you, all the time tearing down the country, when you should just be happy! America is where you can work hard, get a home, a business, and where I can keep track of my daughter, make sure she is safe! Anywhere else in the world I would be worried, but not in the U.S.A! In America I know right where Tiffany is. You see that green dot? That is her, doing her homework, in our home: 13 Paul Avenue!

JEANINE AND DEBORAH
(stunned)
13 Paul Avenue?!

SUNNY
Yes!

JEANINE AND DEBORAH
That can't be right!

SUNNY
I think I know where I live!

JEANINE AND DEBORAH
But -

DEBORAH
But 13 Paul Avenue... that's where I used to live!

SUNNY
What?

DEBORAH
That's where I was kicked out for a beauty salon!

SUNNY
Miss Ella's House of Beau-tay??

DEBORAH
That's the place!

SUNNY
It's mine now! You can't have it back!

JEANINE
It can't be 13 Paul Avenue! That's where...

SUNNY AND DEBORAH
What?

JEANINE
Octopus Tech's new condos!

DEBORAH
You have got to be shittin' me.

SUNNY
But we live there! Eight families are in there!

DEBORAH
(to JEANINE)
When are you moving in?

JEANINE
They told us to be ready in four month.

DEBORAH
Four months? That means they have to start evicting people just about -

SUNNY
No!

SUNNY desperately pulls out phone, dials.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
Tiffany! Tiffany! Answer the phone! Why aren't you answering? Ah! She blocked me!

SUNNY hangs up, shouts into the distance.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
I have to talk to you! Lock all the doors! Shut all the windows! Don't answer the phone if anyone calls! Except me!

DEBORAH
Can you use that S.U.S.I thing?

SUNNY
Good idea! She can't block that - she doesn't know about it. I can turn on the camera and see what's happening!

SUNNY pulls out phone, opens the S.U.S.I. app.

JEANINE
(to DEBORAH)
I thought you didn't like S.U.S.I!

DEBORAH
This is an emergency!

SUNNY
There! I can see the apartment! Tiffany keeps her phone in a stand in the living room.

A knocking is heard.

SUNNY (CONT'D)
What is that knocking? Tiffany! Don't answer the door! For one time listen to your mother - even if you can't hear me!

On another part of the stage a man, MR. SWEETWATER, appears. He is at the front door of SUNNY's apartment.

DEBORAH
Who's that?

SUNNY
Our landlord, Mr. Sweetwater. He looks so sad -

MR. SWEETWATER speaks to Tiffany, who we do not see.

MR. SWEETWATER
(struggling with bad news)
Good afternoon, Tiffany. No, thank you - I don't need to come in. I just wanted to... I... I was wondering, is your mother home? Oh, well... no, really, I don't want to bother you. I... I have a notice for her... it's just... something... When are you expecting her back? Oh. No, I'm fine... I'm just... did I ever tell you - when Ella and I bought this building we always figured eventually our kids would move in, maybe take over the business. But they moved so far away, so far... Oh, never mind. Please tell your mother I'll come back tomorrow to talk to her... No, I'll be out the rest of the day. Moving into my new place. Assisted Living, they call it. Oh, it's very expensive! I couldn't afford it on my pension and Social Security, that's why I had to... well, just tell your mother I have to talk to her tomorrow. Goodbye, Tiffany.

SWEETWATER exits. SUNNY turns on JEANINE.

SUNNY
This is all your fault! I'm sorry I ever hugged you! Tiffany! Pick up the phone! I need to talk to you.

JEANINE
Maybe there's a way to unblock you!

SUNNY
How?

JEANINE
I'll remote log in to access her DFU mode, use bootloader to access her os, then -

SUNNY
Just do it!

JEANINE takes SUNNY's phone and starts to punch in a code. Suddenly the phone starts to make strange sounds.

JEANINE
Wait a minute - Something's wrong... S.U.S.I. is acting weird.

DEBORAH
Must be something wrong with your code -

JEANINE
THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH MY CODE! There must be a glitch with the Tech network. I'll try to access it on my tablet...

JEANINE tries on her tablet, but also finds a problem.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
What is going on?

As if on the screens the Octopus Tech OCTOPUS appears.

Reprise: "A DREAM COME TRUE"

OCTOPUS

GREETINGS FROM OCTOPUS TECH, HELLO!

I HAVE COME HERE TO SADLY INFORM YOU –

THE APP WE CALL S.U.S.I., THAT WE CREATED,

HAS AS OF THIS MOMENT BEEN TERMINATED!

DUE TO A SERIES OF CIVIL COMPLAINTS,

WE ARE HAMPERED BY

LUDICROUS LEGAL CONSTRAINTS!

WE REGRET ANY INCONVENIENCE

THIS MAY CAUSE

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR

MORE INFOR-MAY-SHUN...

AND A PARTIAL REFUND!

OCTOPUS exits.

JEANINE
Deactivated? S.U.S.I. is deactivated? (to phone) What about my Grandma!?

SUNNY
What about my Tiffany? First you take my home, now your stupid app doesn't even work? Captain Deborah?

DEBORAH
Yes?

SUNNY
Please throw her overboard!

JEANINE
No!

DEBORAH
It's not her fault.

SUNNY
What?

DEBORAH
She's just a puppet.

JEANINE
Yeah!

DEBORAH
A stooge, a fool -

JEANINE
Well, wait a minute -

DEBORAH
A pawn in the game to divide the working class.

JEANINE
Middle class!

SUNNY
Working class!

Pause.

DEBORAH AND JEANINE
(stunned)
What?

SUNNY
I worked hard all my life! Why should I be ashamed of that?

DEBORAH
Oh, so now that you're homeless you're a worker?

SUNNY
I'm not homeless! I'm... I'm...

SUNNY breaks down.

JEANINE
(crying)
I am so sorry, Sunny.. I had no idea I was taking your home.

DEBORAH
This is the most depressing cruise I've even given.

SUNNY
Deborah is right. It's not your fault.

JEANINE
Thank you.

SUNNY
You are just a fool.

JEANINE
I'm just a software engineer! I'm not political.

DEBORAH
(meaningfully)
There's no such thing as not political.

JEANINE
There's nothing I can do...

DEBORAH goes back into wheel house.

SUNNY
Can we please go back now? I have to get home.

Boat engine is heard.

DEBORAH
We're almost at the dock now. See? There's Pier 39.

SCENE 9

ON THE PIER

A slick, well dressed man in sunglasses, RUBIN M. MASTERSON, appears on the dock.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
It looks like somebody is waiting for us...

JEANINE
It can't be! It's -

The Distant Horizon pulls up to the dock. JEANINE disembarks.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
Mr. Masterson! What are you doing here?

RUBIN
Just thought I'd surprise my superstar designer!

JEANINE
I am so sorry, Mr. Masterson, I had no idea I was getting Octopus Tech into legal trouble!

RUBIN
Whoa, Jeanine, whoa! What are you talking about?

JEANINE
S.U.S.I., the civil rights violations -

RUBIN
Oh, that! Just a little legalese to cover the end of the beta test.

JEANINE
Beta test?

RUBIN
You know, work out the bugs before we go full scale.

JEANINE
You mean S.U.S.I.'s okay?

RUBIN
Better than okay! From now on she's going to be keeping everybody safe!

JEANINE
Wow!

RUBIN
From terrorists!

JEANINE
What?

RUBIN
(proudly)
S.U.S.I! The Secret Utility for Surveillance and Intelligence! And the government snapped it up.

JEANINE
The government?

RUBIN
Originally they just wanted us to build in a back door, so they could access everybody's information, but I said what the hell - let's just sell them the whole thing! And the best part is I negotiated a deal where the government pays us to manage everything S.U.S.I. collects!

JEANINE
So Octopus Tech will be spying on everyone?

RUBIN
That's the way the national security works! Most people don't know it, but almost the entire N.S.A. is outsourced to private corporations.

JEANINE
What About civil right?

RUBIN
Remember Rubin's Rule #3:

JEANINE
"Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to profit or die."

RUBIN
And you'll be getting a nice fat slice of the profit pie, not to mention that new condo in the Bayview!

JEANINE
Mr. Masterson, about that condo -

SUNNY enters, supported by DEBORAH.

SUNNY
You stole my home!

RUBIN
And this is...?

JEANINE
She lives in the building Octopus Tech is taking over.

RUBIN
Oh. Well, I'm sorry but it's out of my hands.

DEBORAH
How can it be out of your hands? You're buying it!

RUBIN
The corporation is buying it, so technically it's not in anyone's hands. Look, the building was undervalued in a transitioning neighborhood. If the Octopus didn't buy it, someone else would've. At least this way you get a buy-out. Fifty-two hundred dollars...

SUNNY
Where am I supposed to move with fifty-two hundred dollars? That's not enough for a parking space in this town!

DEBORAH
What are the tenants supposed to do?

RUBIN
Rubin's Rule #2:
"Winners and losers are born every day,
If you're not smart enough to win..."

RUBIN looks to JEANINE

JEANINE
(sadly)
"You're just in the way."

SUNNY
People should take care of people, not just talk about profits!

RUBIN
What are you - some kind of communist?

DEBORAH
You probably never struggled to take care of a child like this woman has, or worried about paying bills, or fought to make the world a better place!

RUBIN
I'm not trying to make the world a better place!

DEBORAH
Why not?

RUBIN
Rubin's Rule #1: "Altruism is a trap set by a hippie visionary. You gotta take care of #1 -"

DEBORAH
I am not listening to this!

DEBORAH start to leave.

RUBIN
"- By any means necessary..."

DEBORAH
(stunned)
Wha-what?

RUBIN
Debra. Or is it still Deb-bor-ah?

DEBORAH slowly turns to RUBIN, who takes off his sunglasses

DEBORAH
...Marius?

RUBIN
It's pronounced Mar-ius. Rubin Marius Masterson.

DEBORAH
You're alive!

RUBIN
I know.

DEBORAH
But... but I thought you were -

RUBIN
What - assassinated? Or maybe in a secret prison somewhere?

SUNNY
With a bag over your head!

RUBIN
When S.U.S.I. told me Jeanine was on the Distant Horizon I just couldn't believe it! I just had to see for myself.

DEBORAH
You look...

RUBIN
Great, right? It's the shoes, they're Italian. And you look... old.

DEBORAH
That night... what happened?

RUBIN
I grew up. When I saw what they did to Judi I realized we were never going to win! The "revolution" was just a bunch of ants trying to take down an elephant. And I did not want to get trampled. So I left. Left all the funk and foolishness. Went back to my folks -

DEBORAH
You told me your folks kicked you out!

RUBIN
Well all was forgiven when I went back to school, and got my degree.

DEBORAH
Political science?

RUBIN
Business.

DEBORAH
Business?!

RUBIN
You can't pay for a Maserati with some justice.

DEBORAH
I looked for you... for years! Why didn't you tell me you were going?

RUBIN
Because you loved me, and would've wanted to come with me.

DEBORAH
I would have!

RUBIN
And I needed to leave everything behind if I was going to make a new start.

DEBORAH
You inspired me -

RUBIN
And now I inspire people like her –

RUBIN points at JEANINE

RUBIN (CONT'D)
To make things to sell to -–

RUBIN points at SUNNY

RUBIN (CONT'D)
People like her!

DEBORAH
We were going to change the world!

RUBIN
Well, the world did change, Debra. It changed into... this!

RUBIN looks out over the audience.

RUBIN (CONT'D)
A world where the rich are cool, and where the workers can't even admit to themselves that they are in the working class!

DEBORAH
I thought you loved me!

RUBIN
I did. But - I grew up. It's nice, Debra. Being a grown up. You should try it sometime. Jeanine, come on.

RUBIN starts to exit.

JEANINE
No.

RUBIN
What?

JEANINE
I just wanted my grandma to be safe, and you made me part of the hypno-cryptotic fascistic-ocracy!

RUBIN
(laughing)
The what?

JEANINE
I don't want to make money off of other people's misery!

RUBIN
Fine. I accept your resignation.

JEANINE
Wait, that's it?

RUBIN
Now that S.U.S.I is sewn up, we really don't need you anymore. When I get back to Octopus central I will have your computer wiped and as for your cubical -

JEANINE
My cubicle!

RUBIN
It will be disassembled. Well, I guess I'll see you ladies around.

RUBIN starts to leave, pauses.

RUBIN (CONT'D)
Wait… No, I won't.

RUBIN chuckles, exits.DEBORAH is devastated.

DEBORAH
Marius...

SUNNY
Captain Deborah, can I tell you something? Your ex-boyfriend is a jerk!

DEBORAH
They won. They finally, finally won!

JEANINE
Deborah...

DEBORAH
(beaten)
It's Debra! I'm just Debra... the stupid girl who fell in love with the movement, who fell in love with a man who never existed! All those years wasted…

SUNNY
They weren't wasted. You... you fought for justice -

DEBORAH
I fought for Marius! Now what do I have?

SUNNY
At least you have a boat! What about my home?

DEBORAH
Men like him could buy the whole city, kick us all out!

JEANINE
Oh god! What have I done? I was a fool, a stooge!

SUNNY
You forgot puppet.

JEANINE
What am I supposed to do? Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution...

DEBORAH
It's over.

JEANINE
Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution...

SUNNY
I guess I better get home, to talk to Tiffany.

JEANINE
Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution...

DEBORAH
Maybe it' time for me to take the Distant Horizon out for one last ... I just wish there was some way to get back at him first -

JEANINE
Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution. Problem/Solution...

SUNNY
To get inside the Octopus

DEBORAH
To shut down S.U.S.I.

JEANINE
(absentmindedly)
There is.

DEBORAH AND SUNNY
What?

JEANINE
I built a backdoor.

DEBORAH AND SUNNY
A what?

JEANINE
Coders write them into programs all the time, if we ever have to get back into our software. Wait a minute...

Ding!

JEANINE (CONT'D)
I BUILT A BACKDOOR INTO SU.S.I.!

DEBORAH
You can get back in?

JEANINE
Yes! All I have to do is use my developer's code to access my cloud sandbox, and I can change whatever I want!

SUNNY
You're just remembering this now?

JEANINE
Well, I was a little distracted and overstimulated by Mr. Masterson confirming that I was a puppet for Big Brother.

DEBORAH
What are you going to do?

JEANINE
I thought you weren't interested in tech after 1988.

DEBORAH
Just tell me!

JEANINE pulls out an iPad.

JEANINE
I can't get rid of S.U.S.I. - Octopus Tech would just program another version. But if I can get into the server before they cut me off -

JEANINE starts to type furiously.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
I can use the back door to insert a worm into the program -

SUNNY
You're going to put a worm in S.U.S.I.'s backdoor?

DEBORAH
Well that just sounds filthy.

JEANINE
Done.! Now there's a little bit of code that would set off an alarm if someone puts S.U.S.I. on your phone. Now all we need is an app that looks for the code -

DEBORAH
Is that possible?

JEANINE
With the right app, you can do anything!

DEBORAH
I thought you were just a software engineer. Not political.

JEANINE looks at DEBORAH.

JEANINE
Turns out – there's no such thing as not political.

DEBORAH
If you're going to design this app you're going to need a place to work.

JEANINE
To bad nobody has a nice apartment in the Bayview for me to crash in while I do it...

SUNNY
Uh-oh -

JEANINE
(to SUNNY)
At your place? I couldn't do that!

SUNNY
I don't even have a place!

DEBORAH
(suggestively)
And what do you expect - for her to fight the eviction?

SUNNY
Wait – I can fight the eviction?

DEBORAH
You think she's gonna get all the tenants together, have meetings, get a lawyer, get the press involved -

SUNNY
I could do that?

JEANINE
Doesn't sound very Middle Class...

SUNNY
No...but it sounds very Working Class!

DEBORAH
I could come down and tell everyone about the history of housing in San Francisco, about tenants rights, about the Ellis Act -

SUNNY
You are too angry!

JEANINE
No, she is righteous!

DEBORAH
Ya know what? Maybe my people skills could use a little work. (to SUNNY) You should talk to them.

SUNNY
But first you teach me about the politics. Deal?

DEBORAH
Deal!

SUNNY
If I can organize hair stylists, I can organize a tenant's collective! Much easier.

DEBORAH
Now, I can't guarantee you'll win -

SUNNY
But at least we will try! And that is better than giving up. About this new app - how will you get the word out?

JEANINE
I'll need someone with some political connections -

SUNNY
Don't look at me! (points at DEBORAH) She's the commie!

DEBORAH
I think I still have some friends in Occupy. I'll get in touch with them!

SUNNY
Aren't you afraid you'll get a bag over your head?

DEBORAH
I've been afraid long enough. It's time to fight. Again.

SUNNY
We are going to fight the power! Yeehaw!

SUNNY hugs Jeanine.

JEANINE
You're hugging me again.

SUNNY
I know. Is it okay?

JEANINE
I'll get used to it.

JEANINE notices DEBORAH standing thoughtfully of to the side.

JEANINE (CONT'D)
Debra, are you okay?

DEBORAH
I'm fine. And it's pronounced (proudly) De-bor-ah!

DEBORAH, SUNNY, and JEANINE turn to the audience.

Reprise: "WE'RE ALMOST THERE"

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

SAME OLD TRICK,

SUNNY AND JEANINE

SAME OLD GAME.

DEBORAH

THEY PUSH US INTO CORNERS

WHILE WE CALL EACH OTHER NAMES.

SUNNY

DIVIDE US,

JEANINE

DIVIDE US,

SUNNY AND JEANINE

HOPE WE NEVER SEE

DEBORAH, SUNNY, AND JEANINE

WE ALL SAIL TOGETHER ON THE SAME GREAT SEA!

DEBORAH

IT'S TIME WE UNDERSTAND –

IT'S TIME WE UNDERSTAND –

DEBORAH, SUNNY, AND JEANINE

WE ALL GOT THE SAME DEMAND

YEAH, WE ALL GOT THE SAME DEMAND

DON'T LET UP,

DON'T GET SCARED,

DON'T LET GO,

DEBORAH

FOR ALL WE KNOW -

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

DEBORAH, SUNNY, AND JEANINE

REVOLUTION,

DEBORAH

IS NOT A VIOLENT THREAT –

DEBORAH/SUNNY/JEANINE

REVOLUTION

DEBORAH

IS A MINDSET. IT SAYS,

SUNNY

I KNOW WHO I AM

SUNNY/JEANINE

I KNOW WHAT IT MEANS

DEBORAH, SUNNY, AND JEANINE

TO SHARE THE GIFT THAT LIFE HAS GIVEN

EVERY HUMAN BEING

DEBORAH

THIS CROWD WILL NOT DISBURSE,

THIS CROWD WILL NOT DISBURSE,

THIS CROWD WILL NOT DISBURSE –

DEBORAH, SUNNY, AND JEANINE

'TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST!

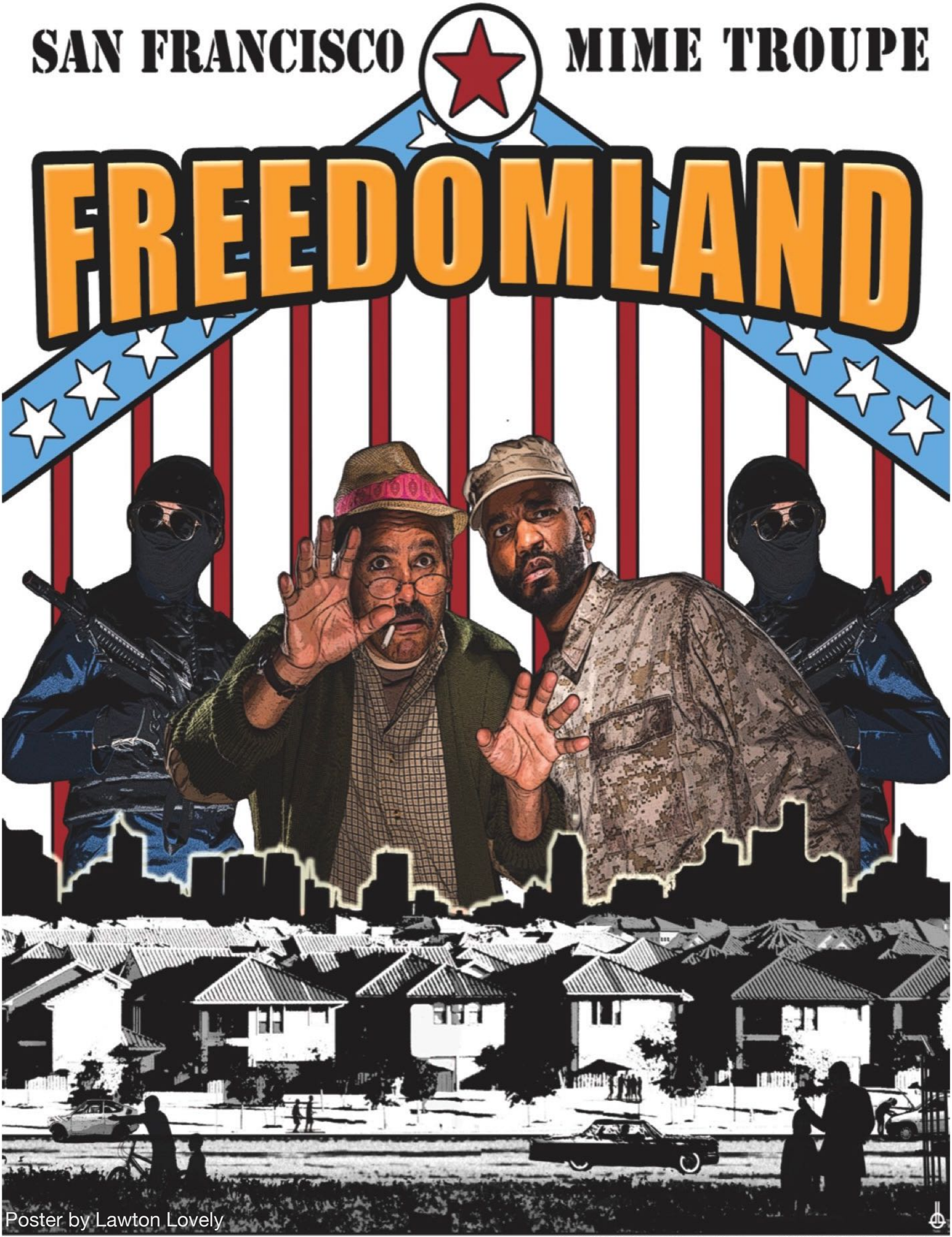
'TIL JUSTICE RULES AND THE EARTH COMES FIRST!

End of play

Lisa Hori-Garcia as JEANINE, Velina Brown as DEBORAH, Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as SUNNY
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

Freedomland

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan
Music and Lyrics by Ira Marlowe


SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE
FREEDOMLAND
Poster by Lawton Lovely

Black Lives Matter exploded onto the scene like a truth bomb as video of the crimes police had been committing against Black Americans showed up on the Facebook and Twitter feeds of suddenly uncomfortable White America. Like seeing police dogs attacking peaceful Civil Rights protestors in the 60's these images of innocent and unarmed finally confirmed for the Majority what Black had known all along - that to the police Black rights, Black innocence, Blacks being unarmed, Black lives actually didn't matter.

Had the War on Drugs morphed in to a War on Blacks, or was that the point all along?

And is t safer to be a Black Man in the Army fighting overseas than it it to be a Black Man walking the streets of America?

And how do you make a farce out of this?

"Deft running gags and a powerful wallop of a reality check lurking under the satirical silliness… High-energy and often hilarious while also serving as a sobering depiction of how entire segments of the population can be automatically seen as a threat because of the color of their skin in this supposedly "postracial" society."
MARIN INDEPENDENT

"The humor is broad, the music is catchy, and by the end, the audience is on their feet to the tune of "There can be no law till there's order / There can be no peace till there's justice… "Freedomland" never gives up. This is a new play with top commedia standards."
THEATRESTORM

"Bravura performance." "Brilliant." "Freedomland stands out as one of the most thoughtful and sobering (of the Troupe's productions.) It is fraught with emotion and analysis. Call it, for want of a better phrase, a "musical tragedy," fueled with a polemicist's intensity, a Shakespearean reach, and a doo-wop dollop of tuneful songs. Freedomland rises to an important new level of radical criticism."
BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

"The production should break under the weight of its content aspirations, but playwright Sullivan and director Snow keep the pathos on simmer until the end. The laughs, served in a steady flow, are justly earned and make it almost too easily bearable to consider the tragic situation on display."
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Malcolm Haywood
Lluis Gutierrez
Emily Militis
Nathaniel Haywood
Chief Parker
Mayor Henderson
Snorfman
Cadet
Cop 1
Cop 2
Cops

FREEDOMLAND opened on July 4th, 2015, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Andrea Snow with the following cast:

Malcolm Haywood, Cadet……Michael Gene Sullivan*
Lluis Gutierrez, Cop 1, Chief Parker……..Hugo Carbajal*
Emily Militis, Gladys……..Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Nathaniel Haywood, Snorfman…….George P. Scott
Cop 2……..Keith Arcuragi
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

A RUN-DOWN, BUT CLEAN APARTMENT. (MALCOLM'S APARTMENT)

There are two doors - a front door leading out of the apartment, and a hallway door leading to the rest of the apartment. There is also a well-worn couch and a side table. On the table is a large burrito on a plateThere is a banging on the front door. Pause. Suddenly the front door bursts open, and a tactical squad of police officers wearing black army fatigues and balaclavas stream into the room, pistols and M-16s at the ready. The COPS are organized terror, spilling into every corner of the room.

COP 1

Go, go, go, go!

COP 2

Nobody move!

Besides the COPS the room is empty. COPS freeze for a second.

COP 1

Check your six!

The COPS huddle defensively back-to-back as they scan the room. COP 1 silently indicates the rest of the apartment, and signals for the others to fan out.

Go!

The three COPS exit through both doors, leaving the room empty. Quiet. After a moment there is the sound of a toilet flushing, and then a middle-aged Black man, MALCOLM HAYWOOD enters through the hallway door. He is singing to himself. MALCOLM settles in on the couch, picks up the burrito, readying to eat, when the COPS suddenly re-enter, guns trained on him. MALCOLM instinctively puts his hands up.

COP 1

Freeze!

MALCOLM

Frozen!

COP 1

Where is it!

MALCOLM

Where is what?

COP 1

it!

MALCOLM

What?

COP 1

IT!

MALCOLM

What?

COPS, Michael gene Sullivan as MALCOLM Photo by Mike Melnyk

COP 1
THE WEED! THE WEED!

MALCOLM
Ain't no weed here!

COP 2 has a tactical iPad strapped to his forearm. He quickly checks its readout.

COP 2
The data base says there is!

MALCOLM
I told you last week you got the wrong address!

COP 1
We've heard that before.

MALCOLM
Yeah! From me! When you kicked in my door last week! And the week before that -

COP 2
(reading from iPad)
Mr. Washington, you have the right to remain silent -

MALCOLM
Haywood! The name is Haywood, not Washington! Malcolm Haywood!

COP 2
(checks iPad)
The database says your name is Washington!

MALCOLM
Well the database is wrong!

COP 2
(defensively)
But... it's the database!

One of the COPS, a young woman - EMILY MILITIS - pulls down her balaclava, revealing her face.

MILITIS
(to MALCOLM)
Do you have some ID?

MALCOLM
Sure -

MALCOLM puts his burrito down, starts to reach for wallet in his pocket, and all cops suddenly train their guns on him again. He freezes.

MALCOLM
Is there any way I can reach for my wallet without ya'll shooting me?

COP 2
(reads iPad)
The database say no.

MILITIS
I'll get it.

MALCOLM puts his hands back up as MILITIS reaches pulls MALCOLM's pocket and pulls wallet out, gets ID

MILITIS
(reading)
Malcolm Haywood, Apartment 12, 1355 Washington Street -

Pause.

COPS
Ooooooooohhhhh...

MALCOLM
Same "ooooooohhh" ya'll said last time -

MILITIS returns MALCOLM's wallet, as MALCOLM finally lowers his hands.

COP 2
(typing in iPad)
So, that's a negative on Washington Street -

MALCOLM
And could you please tell the database that it has me mixed up with -

COP 1
(to Cop 2)
Do we have anything on a Malcolm Haywood?

COP 2
(looking at iPad)
There's nothing, sir.

COP 1
Are you sure? He's Black.

COP 2
No record at all.

COP 1
Fine! Well, Mr. Haywood - if that is your name - I suggest you keep your nose clean from now on...

MALCOLM
Keep my nose clean?

COP 2
(checking iPad)
Sir! I got a hit on the third floor!

COP 1
Yes!

COP 1 charges toward the exit.

COP 2
Lluis Gutierrez -

COP 1 stops.

COP 1
Who?

COP 2
An illegal alien.

COP 1
Is that all? Damn!

COP 2
But, you know - he might have some drugs...

COP 1
Yes! Go, go, go, go, go!

COP 1 and 2 leave through the front door with a flurry of military yelling..

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood, I'd just like to say sorry about the -

COP 1
(offstage)
Come on!

MILITIS exits.

MALCOLM
Hey! What about my door! Who's gonna pay for this?

MALCOLM tries to close broken door.

MALCOLM
Don't even know why I bother to close it. They just gonna bust it in again next week. Got to where a man can't even eat a damn burrito on his couch without some fool with a badge trying to arrest his hot sauce.

While MALCOLM is talking a middle aged, casually dressed man, LLUIS GUTIERREZ, slips into the room through the hallway door.. LLUIS has a Spanish accent.

MALCOLM
Ya'll wouldn't be doin' this if I was thirty years younger -

LLUIS
Try forty.

MALCOLM
(screams)
Ahhhh!

LLUIS
Shhhh!

MALCOLM
Lluis! What'chu doin' here?

LLUIS
I heard them say "illegal aliens," and I was outta there like the Mexican Houdini!

MALCOLM
They bust in your door?

LLUIS
Yeah but they ain't gonna find so much as a Chiclet in there. As far as my apartment is concerned I've never been south of Fresno!

MALCOLM
It's a shame! All these years in this country, a hard-working man -

LLUIS
And all those same years them working just as hard to catch me!

MALCOLM
See, now, that's what I'm talkin' about! - all of this, all of this wouldn't be happening if we'd won... the Revolution!

LLUIS
(sighing)
Here we go -

MALCOLM
That's right here we go! We tried to set this country on the right course. The Young Lords! The Weather Underground!

LLUIS AND MALCOLM
The Black Panthers!

MALCOLM and LLUIS both raise their fists in a Panther salute.

MALCOLM
Those were the days! Did I ever tell you -

LLUIS AND MALCOLM
I knew Huey!

MALCOLM
Used to go fishing together off the Richmond pier. But when we weren't fishin' we put our lives on the line for The People! Me and him... almost changed the world!

Song: "THERE I WAS".

MALCOLM

THERE I WAS! THERE I WAS!

STUCK MY NECK OUT FOR THE CAUSE

ME AND BOBBY SPEAKIN' TRUTH

ME AND HUEY ON THE LOOSE

10-POINT PROGRAM UNDERWAY

OUR PEOPLE SAFER DAY BY DAY

THERE I WAS! THERE I--

Suddenly there is a banging on the front door.

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood! Mr. Haywood!

MILITIS enters. LLUIS suddenly loses his Spanish accent, and takes on the persona and accent of an older Jewish man from Brooklyn. MALCOLM raises his hands.

LLUIS
(berating MALCOLM)
What do you mean you don't want to play Pinocle? This is Tuesday, Tuesday is Pinocle!

MILITIS
Am I interrupting?

LLUIS
(acting startled)
Agh! Don't sneak up like that! You could scare a person!

MILITIS
Sorry!

MALCOLM
(slowly lowering his hands.)
Officer, this is my neighbor, mister -

LLUIS
Shulman, from upstairs.

MILITIS
Upstairs? Say, do you know anything about -

LLUIS
Pinocle? I know everything about it! Wonderful game!

MILITIS
No, we had a report of an illegal alien in unit 4 -

LLUIS
Four! You-nit four people to play! Pinocle! And since mister "Too Busy On Tuesday" doesn't want in perhaps you'd like to join us?

MILITIS
No, thank you -

LLUIS
No need to thank me. It's Pinocle! You'll love it! I'll get the cards -

MILITIS
No! I mean, no. Mister Haywood, I just came back to apologize for the door. I'm sure the department will reimburse you for it.

MALCOLM
You must be new.

MILITIS
Just graduated from the Academy. My first week on the streets.

MALCOLM
Congratulations.

MILITIS
Thanks! I look forward to protecting and serving you. Sorry about the door!

MILITIS exits.

MALCOLM
(to LLUIS)
Pinocle?

LLUIS
(as himself)
Works every time.

MALCOLM
Makes us sound like a couple of old man.

LLUIS
We are a couple of viejos.

MALCOLM
You coulda said poker! That's a man's game. That's what we used to play -

LLUIS AND MALCOLM
Back in the Panthers!

MALCOLM and LLUIS do the Panther salute.

MALCOLM
I remember one time, backroom in Oakland: me, Huey, and Eldridge... Huey had just dealt me three aces -

MALCOLM continues to sing, "THERE I WAS".

MALCOLM

THERE I WAS! THERE I WAS!

HUNKERED DOWN IN OAKLAND TOWN

ELDRIDGE--

Suddenly MILITIS re-enters the room. MALCOLM raises his hands again.

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood -

LLUIS
(Screams, as Shulman) Ahhhh! Again with the scaring! What do you - work in a haunted house?

MILITIS
Sorry, We're leaving now, and I wanted to leave my card. In case you want to get in touch.

MILITIS, proud yet bashful, hands MALCOLM her business card.

MILITIS
I just got them... see? Officer Emily Militis. Here's my number... and my email! Feel free to contact me.

MILITIS starts to leave, stops.

MILITIS
Remember - the police are always here for you!

MILITIS exits.

LLUIS
(as himself)
Yeah, that's what I'm afraid of.

MALCOLM
You know, we didn't have to deal with all this mess -

MALCOLM & LLUIS
Back in the day!

MALCOLM and LLUIS do the Panther salute.

MALCOLM
If the pigs came to a brother's home back then they fittin' to get dealt some

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM, Hugo Carbajal as LLUIS Photo by Rog Franklin

Revolutionary justice!

MALCOLM continues to sing, "There I was".

MALCOLM

THERE I WAS! THERE I WAS!

BADASS IS AS BADASS DOES

PHONE LINES CUT, NO HELP IN SIGHT

AIN'T GOIN' DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT

BULLETS FLYING THROUGH THE DARK

I TOOK MY AIM UPON MY MARK -

Again there is a banging on the front door.

MALCOLM
(putting hands up)
Damn!

LLUIS
(as Shulman)
Pinocle!

The front door opens, and NATHANIEL HAYWOOD, a Black man, mid-twenties, wearing desert-camo U.S. Army fatigues, enters.

NATHANIEL
What, you don't answer the door anymore?

MALCOLM
Nathaniel? Nathaniel!

NATHANIEL
Hey, granddaddy!

MALCOLM runs to NATHANIEL, gives him a big, heartfelt hug, then -

MALCOLM
(upset)
What the hell are you doing here?!

NATHANIEL
What happened to "Welcome home from the Army?" "Glad to see my grandson?"

LLUIS
Nate!

NATHANIEL
Lluis!

LLUIS
Look at you, all grown up! Not my little Nathanielito anymore. It's good to have you back, mijo!

NATHANIEL
It's good to be back.

LLUIS
Six years, Nate, all we got was letters and pictures. Why didn't you visit?

MALCOLM
(conspiratorially)
He... he had things to do!

LLUIS
I was worried about you, but it sounds like things are winding down.

NATHANIEL
Afghanistan? Ain't many of us left, most shipped home.

MALCOLM
So – where they stationing you next?

NATHANIEL
Granddaddy -

MALCOLM
Lotsa hot spots around the world need boots on the ground! How about Yemen? They sendin' you to Yemen?

Nathaniel
Granddaddy -

MALCOLM
Pakistan! Always something happening there!

NATHANIEL
Granddaddy -

MALCOLM
Sudan?

NATHANIEL
I'm out.

MALCOLM
What do you mean?

NATHANIEL
I did my time - two tours. I'm done.

MALCOLM
Done...?

LLUIS
Mal! You're acting like you wish he wasn't here.

MALCOLM
It's not that, it's just - Ukraine! Maybe if you sign-up right away-

LLUIS
I woulda thought an ex-Black Panther like you wouldn't want your grandson fighting for The Man anyway.

MALCOLM
I don't want him in the fightin'! It's just that he shouldn't be here, either.

LLUIS
Why not?

MALCOLM
Because -

LLUIS
Por que?

MALCOLM
Because! Him being in the army is all part of...
(dramatically whispers)
The Plan!

MALCOLM goes to check the door.

LLUIS
(to NATHANIEL)
What is he talking about?

MALCOLM
I'm talking about...
(dramatically whispers)
The Plan!

NATHANIEL
Granddad has this idea -

MALCOLM
It's not an idea! It's...
(dramatically whispers)
The Plan!

LLUIS
Okay...

MALCOLM
Nate - The plan!

NATHANIEL obediently snaps to attention and begins to almost militarily recite what MALCOM has clear drilled into his head.

NATHANIEL
That the only way to overthrown the -

NATHANIEL AND MALCOLM
Imperialist Police States of America -

NATHANIEL
Is for us to first master the weapons and strategies of our -

Nathaniel AND MALCOLM

Fascist overlords!

NATHANIEL

And the only way to do this is for some of me to join -

MALCOLM

Ahhhh...

NATHANIEL AND MALCOLM

Infiltrate -

NATHANIEL

The military!

NATHANIEL

Then I can bring what I learned back to the community and help train -

NATHANIEL AND MALCOLM

Our revolutionary army!

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL raise fists in Panther salute.

LLUIS

Well, somebody has been reading too much Franz Fanon. Look, I'm going back to my room, make sure they didn't mess with my tchotchkes. Nathaniel, welcome back. Malcolm, try to relax.

LLUIS exits the apartment..

MALCOLM

(to LLUIS)

Oh, I'll relax... when the Revolution is over!

(to NATHANIEL)

Nate, you gotta go back -

NATHANIEL

I can't.

MALCOLM

It'd be just like The Spook who sat by the Door!

NATHANIEL

I can't go back!

MALCOLM

But... but what about The Plan?

NATHANIEL

Granddad... did my parents know about The Plan?

MALCOLM

Of course they did. It was their idea.

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM, George P. Scott as NATHANIEL,
Hugo Carbajal as LLUIS Photo by Mike Melnyk

NATHANIEL
I don't remember them.

MALCOLM
I do. Before the pigs took down my daughter and her husband they made me promise that if anything happened to them I would carry out... The Plan! And I can't go back on that promise.

NATHANIEL
Yeah... listen, I'm gonna head out, check in with Teddy and Marcus, and the boys, let 'em know I'm back on the block. It's good to see you, Pop Pop.

NATHANIEL exits the apartment..

MALCOLM
(distraught)
Nate...

Reprise: "THERE I WAS".

MALCOLM

THERE HE GOES, THERE HE GOES

DOWN THAT STREET AND THEN WHO KNOWS

SIX GOOD YEARS, A PLAN IN PLACE

SOLDIER, GET BACK TO THE BASE

WHEN HE'S STEPPIN' OUT THAT DOOR

HE'S WALKIN' THROUGH A BATTLEFIELD

HE AIN'T READY FOR

REVOLUTION GOTTA COME

I CAN HEAR THAT MOTOR RUN

FIRST I GOT MY DAUGHTER'S SON

TO KEEP ALIVE TO KEEP ALIVE

HE'S THE HOPE TO MAKE IT THROUGH

TEAR THIS DOWN FOR SOMETHING NEW

FIRST THING THAT HE'S GO TO DO

IS KEEP ALIVE, JUST KEEP ALIVE

MALCOLM

It's good to see you, too...

MALCOLM exits through hallway door.

SCENE 2

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

A brusk, middle-aged man in a dress police uniform, CHIEF PARKER, enters. He is having a heated conversation on a phone.

CHIEF PARKER
(on phone)
No, no! You listen to me! This police department has been getting weapons from the military for twenty years! How am I supposed to stop people from taking drugs without a helicopter! What do you mean the policy changed?

A Black man in a sharp suit, MAYOR HENDERSON, enters. He is waving a newspaper.

MAYOR HENDERSON
Chief Parker!

CHIEF PARKER
(on phone)
Franklin County just got a army helicopter last month - and they have half the drug arrests we do!

MAYOR HENDERSON
Have you seen the latest polls?

CHIEF PARKER
No! We do not need any body cameras! Listen - Hel-i-cop-ter!

MAYOR HENDERSON
I am down to 37%!

CHIEF PARKER
Yes, we have an armored car - but can it fly? No!

MAYOR HENDERSON
We've got to do something!

CHIEF PARKER
(on phone)
You know what they call a flying armored car? A helicopter!

PARKER hangs up.

CHIEF PARKER
Politicians - always getting in the way of governing.

MAYOR HENDERSON
(frightened)
What?

CHIEF PARKER
Not you, Mr. Mayor. But suddenly these Liberals wants to "de-militarize" local police forces! How are we supposed to run a war on drugs without the weapons of war? Two more years. After that - every new president starts term by promising the police whatever we want.

MAYOR HENDERSON
Maybe so, but I don't think you and I are going to be around long enough to see it!

CHIEF PARKER
Why not?

Hugo Carbajal as PARKER, Michael Gene Sullivan as HENDERSON Photo by Rog Franklin

MAYOR HENDERSON
(reading newspaper)
"Latest polls indicate citizens of State open to the legalization of marijuana!"

CHIEF PARKER
Let me see that!

CHIEF takes paper, reads

CHIEF PARKER
"Legislature may vote to decriminalize pot." Oh my God! Without pot what am I gonna arrest all these Black folks for?

MAYOR HENDERSON
Without Black felons what am I gonna scare the White voters with?

CHIEF PARKER
First gay marriage, now this!

MAYOR HENDERSON
It's not just votes, it's money Parker!! People expect city hall to fix potholes, keep the street lights on, to keep things nice. But since the factories closed down and the tax base dried up 60% of our town's revenue - and 100% of your police budget - comes from the bail and fines we get from arresting Black people!

CHIEF PARKER
Mr. Mayor, calm down! Relax -

MAYOR HENDERSON
I'm a Black mayor elected by White people - I'm never relaxed!

CHIEF PARKER
All we have to do is keep the light side of town afraid of the dark side, and we'll be fine.

MAYOR HENDERSON
But if the black folks aren't in jail... they can vote against me!

CHIEF PARKER
We'll deal with them the same way we always have: pick 'em up, and talk 'em into taking a felony plea bargain. After that they're felons, and can't ever vote.

MAYOR HENDERSON
But what are you gonna charge them now?

CHIEF PARKER
Ummmm...Crack?

MAYOR HENDERSON
Too 80's.

CHIEF PARKER
Heroin!

MAYOR HENDERSON
Too chic.

CHIEF PARKER
Meth? No, that's how we keep poor White folks from voting.

MAYOR HENDERSON
Well, we better think of something, otherwise I'm out of a job -

CHIEF PARKER
And I'll never get my helicopter.

MILITIS enters, with an official-looking folder..

MiLITIS
Chief Parker, sir.

CHIEF PARKER
What is it?

MILITIS
This just came in - a directive regarding a new drug.

MILITIS hands CHIEF PARKER a piece of paper.

CHIEF PARKER
(reads)
From: The Drug Enforcement Agency. To: all State and Local police departments. We have reports of a new, dangerous narcotic entering our country from across our southern border. Very little is known about this latest threat to America except its name -"

MAYOR HENDERSON AND CHIEF PARKER
(reading)
Sarcaxnadoramanacanafan?
(to each other)
Sarcaxnadoramanacanafan?

MILITIS
On the street they call it - SNORF!

CHIEF PARKER
(reads)
"You are hereby instructed to prosecute the users and traffickers of this drug to the fullest extent of the law."

MAYOR and CHIEF look to each other.

MAYOR HENDERSON AND CHIEF PARKER
SNORF...

MAYOR HENDERSON
That sounds terrible...

MlITIS
Have you seen what it does to kids?

MAYOR HENDERSON AND CHIEF PARKER
No...

MILITIS
It's not pretty.

MILITIS hands CHIEF PARKER the folder, who then looks inside with MAYOR HENDERSON. Both recoil in horror.

MAYOR HENDERSON AND CHIEF PARKER
(screaming)
Ahhhhh!

CHIEF PARKER composes himself, gets an inspiration..

CHIEF PARKER
If we don't do something this drug will be in every home, every backpack, every school lunch box in America...

MAYOR HENDERSON
(catching on)
Officer... did the Feds say anything about the demographic of these SNORFheads?

MILITIS
Apparently communities of color would be the hardest hit.

MAAYOR HENDERSON
(excited)
Yes! (realizes this is an impolitic reaction, feigns outrage and sympathy) I mean, no! We'll have to do something for those poor, poor people.

MILITIS
We'll stop it, sir!

CHIEF PARKER
You bet we will - Even if we have to drive our armored car through every house down in Jackson Circle to do it!

MAYOR HENDERSON
And we'll have to get the word out about this to the White fo - the folks - up in Edgerton Crescent, too. Posters, newspapers, maybe even some TV spots!

CHIEF PARKER
Maybe we'll even need... a helicopter!

MAYOR HENDERSON
(to MILITIS)
And you're sure its a felony?

MILITIS
Manufacture, possession, distribution...

CHIEF PARKER
Thank you, officer.

MILITIS exits.

MAYOR HENDERSON
And thank you DEA!

CHIEF PARKER
We can always rely on Drug Enforcement to give us a reason to arrest Black people!

MAYOR HENDERSON
But what if the folks down in Jackson Circle don't have any SNORF?

CHIEF PARKER
Well, what would you do if someone kicked in your door to get something that didn't exist?

MAYOR HENDERSON
I'd tell them to get the hell out!

CHIEF PARKER
Interfering with an officer in the execution of his duty is also a felony. I don't think you'll have to worry about the Black voters for a while.

MAYOR HENDERSON
SNORF... sounds like something somebody just made up.

CHIEF PARKER
Yeah, it does, doesn't it...

CHIEF PARKER and MAYOR HENDERSON exit.

SCENE 3

MALCOLM'S APARTMENT.

Quiet, then LLUIS pops his head in through the hallway door. He sneakily slides into the room, and when he is sure he is alone he crosses to the couch, picks up the remote, and turns on the TV. The overwrought music of a telenovela fills the room.

MANUEL
(TV voice-over)
Oh, Graciela! Cuando miro en tus hermosos ojos es como mirar en el alma bella de todas las mujeres hermosas!

GRACIELA
(TV voice-over)
Y tú, Manuel, eres todos los hombres hermosos!

LLUIS is enthralled.

MANUEL
(TV voice-over)
Oh, Graciela!

GRACIELA
(TV voice-over)
Oh, Manuel! Te quiero!

MANUEL
Y te amo!

LLUIS
But what about her husband?

MANUEL
(TV voice-over)
Pero Àtu marido?

LLUIS
He's a narco, and does not play!

GRACIELA
(on screen)
Sólo se casó conmigo por dinero!

LLUIS
'Cuz he's all about the money...

GRACIELA
(on screen)
Pero ... no puedo dejarlo!

LLUIS

Just leave him!

MANUEL

(on screen)

Por qué no?

LLUIS

Yeah, por que no?

GRACIELA

(on screen)

Porque tengo ... un terrible secreto!

LLUIS

A secret!

GRACIELA

(on screen)

Un secreto a nadie más que mi familia debe saber!

LLUIS

You can tell Manuel - he loves you!

GRACIELA

(on screen)

No puedo!

LLUIS

Tell him!

GRACIELA

(TV voice-over)

El terrible secreto ... que ha perseguido a mi familia ... por generaciones. Mi tatarabuelo.

The front door opens, and MALCOLM enters, agitated.

MALCOLM

I couldn't find Nate anywhere!

GRACIELA

(TV voice-over)

No era un monje -

LLUIS is torn between the two stories.

MALCOLM

I went to Teddy's, I went to the park -

GRACIELA

(TV voice-over)

Y no murió en paz su cama -

MALCOLM
Nobody's seen him!

GRACIELA
(TV voice-over)
Porque en realidad era-

MALCOLM
I just hope he isn't -

GRACIELA
(TV voice-over)
Un werewolf!

LLUIS
A werewolf?

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM, Hugo Carbajal as LLUIS.....Photo bu Mike Melnyk

GRACIELA
Si!

LLUIS
Well, that explains why her son is so hairy!

MALCOLM snaps off the TV.

LLUIS
Hey!

MALCOLM
Lluis!

LLUIS
I don't have cable!

MALCOLM
Nate is out there somewhere!

LLUIS
He'll be okay.

MALCOLM
You know how it is! Ain't no way a Black man can be okay.

LLUIS
Could be worse.

MALCOLM
How?

LLUIS
He could be a werewolf.

The front door opens, and NATHANIEL enters.

MALCOLM
Nathaniel! Where have you been?

NATHANIEL
I went down to see Marcus, but he wasn't there. His folks wouldn't tell me where he was. Just kept saying they were so glad to see me, glad I was okay, but would say nothin' about their own son.

MALCOLM
You... you need to get back to the Army Nate.

NATHANIEL
Six years, and it's like I don't know anybody around here anymore. All my boys are gone - Marcus, D'Wayne, Teddy...

MALCOLM
You are gonna be just like Geronimo Pratt: trained by the army, fightin' against the Man!

NATHANIEL
I told you before, Pop Pop -

MALCOLM
I know, I know, but just hear me out -

NATHANIEL
No -

MALCOLM
It's The Plan!

NATHANIEL
No -

MALCOLM
Your parent's plan-

NATHANIEL
I'M NOT GOING BACK!

Pause. NATHANIEL has never yelled at his grandfather before.

NATHANIEL
You know what my job was over there, Pop Pop? Scaring people. That's it. It wasn't about learning weapons, tactics, strategy, naw... One time, we came on some kids playing soccer with a balled-up sweater. And I though hey, I'm gonna give these kids a real soccer ball. So I come back next day with the ball, and they were so happy, smiling so big. But when I went to throw it to 'em my weapon slipped off my shoulder and I had to grab it... and all those smiles turned to terror. Just like that. All those kids... looking at me with my hand on my gun. Looking at me, scared -

LLUIS
Like you was some kinda monster...

NATHANIEL
And they really thought I was gonna shoot them. That I could.

MALCOLM
You wouldn't do that -

Song: "MONSTER".

NATHANIEL

ON THE DAY I SIGNED, I WAS NOT SO BLIND

AS KIDS YOU SEE,

ALL YOUNG AND GREEN
AND FILLED WITH DREAMS OF GLORY.
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
JOHN WAYNE AND APPLE PIE -
I WOULD DO MY BEST
JUST NOT TO DIE.

EACH PATROL, WE'D TAKE CONTROL
OF A DUSTY TOWN
I CAN'T FORGET THEIR FACES WHEN
WE'D COME AROUND.
A SWARM OF MEN IN ARMORED CARS
WHO FRIGHTEN ALL THEY SEE
I DIDN'T NEED TO BE A HERO
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE -

A MONSTER!
A MONSTER!
GOIN' HOUSE TO HOUSE,
DOOR TO DOOR
NEVER SURE WHAT FOR
A MONSTER!
A MONSTER!
MOVIN' IN QUICK
TO FLUSH 'EM OUT
PULL YOUR TRIGGER WHEN IN DOUBT
A MONSTER!
A MONSTER!

GRANDDAD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE PLAN,

INFILTRATE THE ARMY THEN TURN IT ON THE MAN.

BUT I'M TOO TIRED TO TRY AND TURN

THIS WHOLE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN -

I JUST WANT A LITTLE HOUSE,

ON A QUIET SIDE OF TOWN,

AND A JOB TO GO TO EVERY DAY

AND A SAFE PLACE FOR OUR KIDS TO PLAY

I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY...

NATHANIEL

I ain't goin' back.

NATHANIEL exits through the hallway door.

LLUIS

That's deep...

MALCOLM

Yeah.

LLUIS

I hope he didn't scare those kids off futbol.

MALCOLM

Lluis!

LLUIS

It's not like they have much else!

MALCOLM

This is a crisis!

LLUIS

Mal, all this is a crisis! No jobs, everything is run-down and falling apart with no money to fix it, the ground is poisoned, and weather's going crazy 'cuz we broke the sky! Those kids got a crisis every time they wake up, and I got a crisis every time I step out my door I gotta wonder am I gonna get picked up and tossed across the border, never see my home again. So forgive me if I want those kids to have some futbol, or I spend a little time each day watching a novella, watching someone else's drama so I can forget mine!

Pause.

MALCOLM

Werewolves, huh?

LLUIS
A whole family of them! Her husband knows, and she just told her boyfriend!

MALCOLM
Boyfriend? And a husband?

LLUIS
And a hairy son!

MALCOLM joins LLUIS on the couch.

MALCOLM
Is it still on?

The front door bursts open, and two COPS leap in. Screaming, guns drawn, pointed at MALCOLM and LLUIS, who quickly put their hands up.

COPS
Freeze!

MALCOLM
Froze!

COP 2
Where is it?

MALCOLM
Where is what?

COP 2
SNORF!

LLUIS & MALCOLM
What?

COP 2
Snorf! Snorf!

Pause.

COP 2
SNORF!

MALCOLM
I have no idea what you are talking about.

COP 2
According to our database you, Malcolm Washington, have been selling SNORF near an elementary school -

MALCOLM
The name is Haywood, not Washington!

COP 2
Shut-up, you filthy SNORF-dealer! Have you seen what that stuff does to kids?

MILITIS enters.

MILITIS
(to COPS)
Stand down! I told you, our intel is wrong! Now get outta here!

COPS reluctantly lower guns.

COP 2
(to MALCOLM)
Well, keep your nose clean!

COPS exit.MALCOLM and LLUIS lower their arms.

MALCOLM
Why is everybody so interested in how dirty my nose is?

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood, I'm sorry about this. Mr. Shulman -

LLUIS
(again with the accent of an older Jewish man, Shulman)
Accidents, they happen. As long as no one gets hurt, no one gets hurt. Now I must go back to my room and prepare for the Sabbath. Unless of course you'd like to stay a while for some... pinocle!

MILITIS
I GOTTA go!

MILITIS exits. LLUIS gives a knowing nod to MALCOLM.

LLUIS
(as himself)
Every time...

LLUIS exits through the front door.. NATHANIEL enters from hallway door, wearing civilian clothing.

NATHANIEL
What was all that noise?

MALCOLM
Me and Lluis were just watching one of his soap operas! Those things get pretty rowdy. Nate -

NATHANIEL
I know what you're gonna say, Pop Pop.

MALCOLM
You're not going back to the Army. I understand. My daughter wouldn't want you feelin' like a monster, goin' into peoples homes, terrorizing folks-

NATHANIEL

Good.

Pause.

MALCOLM

So how 'bout the Navy?

The front door bursts open, COPS stream in, screaming, pointing the guns at MALCOLM and NATHANIEL, who put their hands up.

COP 1

Freeze!

MALCOLM

Don't ya'll check with each other?

COP 1

Malcolm Washington -

MALCOLM

Haywood!

COP 1

Whatever! You have the right to remain silent -

NATHANIEL

(to COP 1)

What the hell do you want?

MALCOLM

(to NATHANIEL)

Nate! Calm down, it's just a mistake -

NATHANIEL lowers his hands.

NATHANIEL

They can't just bust in here -

MALCOLM

That'll be news to them!

NATHANIEL

I've been off fighting for this country -

MALCOLM

Nate, don't -

NATHANIEL

For cowards like these to kick in your door? Hell no! Power to the People, and -

MALCOLM

Nate -

NATHANIEL
(to COP)
Death to the -

MALCOLM
Nate, no!

NATHANIEL
- Pigs!

NATHANIEL raises a fist in a Panther salute.

COP 1
(to NATHANIEL)
Okay, you, hands behind your back!

COP 1 grabs NATHANIEL's arm, starts to handcuff him, while the other COP keeps his gun trained on MALCOLM.

MALCOLM
Please, officer, please! He just got back home... he was in the Army-

Keith Arcuragi, Hugo Carbajal as COPS, George P. Scott as NATHANIEL,
Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM Photo by Rog Franklin

COP 1

Shut up!

Suddenly COP 2 enters.

COP 2

Sir!

COP 1

What?

COP 2 shows COP 1 a readout on his forearm iPad.

COP 1
(reading)

1355 Washington Street... (realizing mistake) Ooooooooooh...

MALCOLM

I told you!

COP 1

Well..., you... just... Keep your nose clean, Haywood!

COP 1 pulls the handcuffed NATHANIEL towards the door.

COP 1

Come on!

MALCOLM

But.. but it's the wrong address! Why are you taking him?

COP 1

Obstructing justice! Come on, boy!

COP 1 exits with NATHANIEL, as the other COPS hold MALCOLM at gunpoint. Finally all the COPS leave. His plan in shambles MALCOM is distraught and panicked.

MALCOLM

NO!

Struck with an idea MALCOLM exits through the hallway door..

SCENE 4

AN INTERROGATION ROOM AT THE POLICE STATION.

NATHANIEL, handcuffed, is roughly led in by a COP 1, who shoves NATHANIEL into a chair.

COP1

Sit down!

NATHANIEL

Don't I get to call a lawyer?

COP1

He'll just tell you the same thing he tells everyone else.

NATHANIEL

And what's that?

COP1

Just cop a plea.

NATHANIEL

What?

COP1

Obstructing justice- that's a felony in this state. You're looking at 5 years in prison at least. Unless...

NATHANIEL

Unless what?

COP1

Unless you plead guilty. A few months up at County, then you're free as a bird!

NATHANIEL

A bird on parole. A bird that can't vote, that can't get a job!

COP1

Birds don't have jobs.

NATHANIEL

It's a metaphor!

MILITIS enters.

MILITIS

What do we have here, officer?

NATHANIEL

You fascists ain't got nothin' on me!

COP 1

His name's Washington.

NATHANIEL

No, it ain't -

MILITIS

Mr. Washington, before you get in more trouble I suggest -

NATHANIEL

The name is Haywood!

MILITIS stops, seeing NATHANIEL for the first time.

MILITIS

Sarge? Sargent Nathaniel Haywood!

NATHANIEL

Yeah...

MILITIS

Emily Militis!

NATHANIEL

Militis...

MILITIS

Forward Base Bravo, 4th Brigade, Kabul -

NATHANIEL & MILITIS

The... Cobras!

MILITIS

"Hooded snakes, lightning fast, one wrong move - this day's your last!"

NATHANIEL

"We'll fight our foes and never cease -"

NATHANIEL AND MILITIS

"And kill so that you can have peace!"

For a moment the two vets forget their situation, and are just glad to see each other..

NATHANIEL

Corporal Militis! What are you doing here?

MILITIS

This is my home town, remember?

NATHANIEL

That's right! Edgerton Crescent!

MILITIS

And you're Jackson Circle!

NATHANIEL
Hey, you never said you wanted to be a cop.

MILITIS
You never said you wanted to be a criminal.

NATHANIEL
I'm not a criminal!

MILITIS
Right! There's obviously been a mistake. (to COP 1) Why is this man here?

COP 1
Obstructing an officer in the execution of his duty.

NATHANIEL
They kicked in my grandfather's door!

COP 1
Malcolm Washington -

NATHANIEL
Haywood!

MILITIS
(recognizing the name)
On Washington street?

COP 1
That's the one!

MILITIS
This is all just a database mistake!

COP 1 checks iPad.

COP 1
There's nothing in the database about a database mistake.

MILITIS
Look, I've spoken with Mr. Haywood, and -

NATHANIEL
You know granddaddy?

MILITIS
Well... I've been to his place a few times...

COP 1
(indicating NATHANIEL)
Even if this is a... misunderstanding... that doesn't excuse him!

MILITIS
From defending his home when a bunch of men kick in his door? What would you do if the police tried to drag your innocent grandfather away?

COP 1
That would never happen...

NATHANIEL
And we all know why.

COP 1 exit. MILITIS unshackles NATHANIEL.

NATHANIEL
Corporal Militis, I'm proud of how you stood up for me.

MILITIS
And I'm ashamed of you for breaking the law!

NATHANIEL
But you just said -

MILITIS
No excuse for getting between an officer and his duty. Without respect for the law we have anarchy.

Hugo Carbajal as COP, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MILITIS, George P. Scott as NATHANIEL
Photo by Rog Franklin

NATHANIEL
Anarchy was these pi--- police officers busting into our apartment!

MILITIS
We need law and order.

NATHANIEL
That wasn't law!

MILITIS
It was order! You gotta start somewhere, Sarge. Like in Afghanistan. When things are falling apart you gotta give people something to stand on so they can re-build there lives. Remember what it was like when we first got to Kabul?

Song, "UNTIL THERE'S ORDER".

MILITIS

WARLORDS,

CONTROLLED THE STREETS

CHILDREN,

LOST WITHOUT A THING TO EAT.

CHAOS, ANARCHY, DESPERATION

IN THE EYES OF EVERYONE WE'D MEET.

SO WE CLAMPED DOWN HARD,

SHOWED WHO'S IN CHARGE,

WE CREATED SPACE,

FOR A BETTER PLACE!

PULLED NO PUNCHES

GAVE NO QUARTER

THERE CAN BE NO LAW...

UNTIL THERE'S ORDER!

NATHANIEL

WE ARE NOT AT WAR HERE,

MILITIS
(spoken)
I'm afraid we are...

NATHANIEL

THIS IS OUR HOME TOWN!

MILITIS
(spoken)
Like I don't know that...

NATHANIEL

PEOPLE WHO'VE KNOWN FOREVER,

CHILDREN WHO'VE GROWN UP TOGETHER

LAUGHED, AND HUNG AROUND.

BUT WHEN YOU BANG DOWN DOORS -

MILITIS
It's crime we're fighting here.

NATHANIEL

NO MATTER WHAT IT'S FOR -

MILITIS
It's for everyone.

NATHANIEL

THEN WE PUT UP WALLS,

AND TURN AWAY,

AND LEARN TO HATE YOU MORE AND MORE!

MILITIS

PULL NO PUNCHES,

GIVE NO QUARTER,

THERE CAN BE NO LAW -

NATHANIEL

THERE CAN BE NO PEACE -

MILITIS

THERE CAN BE NO LAW,

UNTIL THERE'S ORDER

NATHANIEL

ORDER ME, YEAH

ORDER ME -- FACEDOWN ON THE GROUND!

BECAUSE YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I'M WEARING

AND MY SKIN'S A CERTAIN SHADE OF BROWN!

THERE CAN BE NO ORDER NO ORDER

WITHOUT TRUST

THERE CAN BE NO PEACE -

UNTIL THERE'S JUSTICE!

NATHANIEL
It didn't work in Afghanistan, and it won't work here.

MILITIS
If we just had more cops on the street -

NATHANIEL
Folks around here don't need more cops - they need jobs!

MILITIS
Sarge, these people -

NATHANIEL
"These people?" Oh, you mean like me? I'm one of "these people!"

MILITIS
Not you, Sarge!

NATHANIEL
Only difference between me and them is that you know me.

MALCOLM enters.

MALCOLM
Nate! There you are! People been givin' me the run around - he's over here, he's over there... I paid your bail. Let's get out of here!

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL start to the door.

MILITIS

Sargent Haywood -

NATHANIEL

Corporal Militis... you got nothin' for me.

MILITIS

I'd like to talk to you -

NATHANIEL

Come on, Pop Pop.

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL exit. MILITIS goes to desk, picks up phone.

MILITIS

Desk? Where's the Chief? I need to talk to him. I have an idea -

MILITIS exits.

SCENE 5

MALCOLM'S APARTMENT.

LLUIS is sitting on the couch, wearing a bathrobe, watching futbol on the television.

ANNOUNCER
(TV voice-over)
"Argüello tiene el balón. De prisa por todo el campo. El delantero se desliza hacia el balón, pero le erra. Hernandez lo trae corrido, pero falla el bloque. Argüello se apunta, cerca de esquina, le tira y -"

MALCOLM and Nathaniel enter through front door, arguing.

NATHANIEL
Why didn't you tell me before?

MALCOLM
I didn't want you worried -

ANNOUNCER & LLUIS
Gooooaaaaal!

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL look at LLUIS, who sheepishly turns off tv.

LLUIS
Sorry.

NATHANIEL
Teddy's dead. Marcus in prison. For what?

LLUIS
You guys alright?

NATHANIEL
Yeah, except I'm just finding out half my friends are in jail - or dead.

LLUIS
(to MALCOLM)
Sounds like by the time you start your revolution won't be nobody left to fight on your side.

MALCOLM
You take care of your revolution, let me take care of mine! And what are you doing in here?

LLUIS
My water got shut off. Paid my bill, in cash - but now there's some glitch in the Matrix, and they want me to come downtown. No way! The Man would snatch me up like a hawk. So... no water.

MALCOLM
Is it The Man's fault you're wearing my bathrobe?

LLUIS
Naw, I just like the color. And it's soooo soft!

LLUIS exits the apartment..

MALCOLM
See? That's why we need a revolution!

NATHANIEL
So Lluis can have a bathrobe?

MALCOLM
So we can all have enough to take care of ourselves! "From each according to his ability - "

NATHANIEL
"To each according to his need."

There is a knock at the front door. MALCOLM crosses to answer it.

MALCOLM
You wanna make a difference? You wanna save your friends? The only way things are gonna change is with a revolution! Death to the Pigs!

MALCOLM opens the door, and is confronted by a COP in full SWAT uniform. MALCOLM screams, slams door.

NATHANIEL
Who was it?

As a panicked MALCOLM tries to get NATHANIEL to join him in sneaking out the hallway door..

MILITIS
(offstage)
Mr. Haywood! Mr. Haywood!

NATHANIEL
Militis?

MALCOLM
Don't open it!

NATHANIEL opens front door. MILITIS enters, carrying a folder.

MILITIS
Nate! I'm glad you're here- I have a surprise for you!

The CHIEF calmly enters, wearing dress blues. A looming, balaclava wearing, M-16 carrying COP 3 stands in doorway. The CHIEF is carrying a folder.

CHIEF PARKER
Good afternoon, gentlemen. Please, please, put your hands down.

MILITIS
(presenting)
Chief Parker!

CHIEF PARKER
(to MALCOLM)
And you must be Mr. Haywood!

MALCOLM
For the last time the name is... wait, that's right!

CHIEF PARKER
And this must be Sargent Nathaniel Haywood... I've heard a lot about you.

NATHANIEL
From who?

MALCOLM
The F.B.I.?

MILITIS
From me.

CHIEF PARKER
Officer Militis here tells me you two served together.

NATHANIEL
Afghanistan.

CHIEF PARKER
I salute your service.

CHIEF sharply salutes, NATHANIEL returns salute

CHIEF PARKER
And now that you are home, do you have a plan?

NATHANIEL
Um, well, I -

MALCOLM
(panicking)
No! There is no plan! THERE IS NO PLAN WHATSOEVER!

CHIEF PARKER
Well, I'm glad to hear that. Please, have a seat.

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL sit on the couch between the COPS.

CHIEF PARKER
I was wondering if you might like to join us down at the police station -

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL look at each other.

CHIEF PARKER
As our newest recruit! You are just what we need to fill out the force.

MILITIS
The force is full of vets - you'd fit right in!

CHIEF PARKER
(with air quotes)
And you're from the "community!"

MALCOLM AND NATHANIEL
(with air quotes)
The "community?"

CHIEF PARKER
Militis here says that's what we need - "community policing". Especially now, with SNORF ravaging the neighborhood. Have you seen what that stuff does to kids?

MILITIS opens folder, showing picture to MALCOLM and NATHANIEL.

MALCOLM AND NATHANIEL
(screaming)
Ahhhh!

CHIEF PARKER
That's why the "community" *(air quotes)* needs brave young men like you.

MiLITIS
To stand up for law and order!

NATHANIEL
Law and order? You gonna talk to me about law and order? I'll tell you! My Granddaddy -

MALCOLM
(suddenly all smiles)
Wants to do all he can to help the police!

NATHANIEL
(confused)
What are you talkin' -

MALCOLM
Talkin'! Of course! We're going to have to be talkin' about it!

CHIEF PARKER
Well, that's wonderful! You talk it over, and then come down to the station. We look forward to working with you, Nate! Can I call you Nate?

MALCOLM
You certainly can!

CHIEF PARKER
Goodbye, Mr. Haywood, and Nate... See you soon!

CHIEF PARKER exits apartment, followed by MILITIS. COP 3 pauses, looking menacingly, tensely at MALCOLM and NATHANIEL. Finally COP 3 exits. MALCOLM securely closes front door, turns to NATHANIEL in a panic.

MALCOLM
We gotta pack your bags!

NATHANIEL
Where am I going?

MALCOLM
Anywhere but here! Police got their eye on you now, and they ain't gonna take it off 'til you're in a prison or a grave.

NATHANIEL
I'm not goin' back to the Army.

MALCOLM
Air Force?

NATHANIEL
No!

MALCOLM
Coast Guard?

NATHANIEL
No!

MALCOLM
The Mounties?

NATHANIEL
That's Canadian!

MALCOLM
Canada! It's The New Plan!

NATHANIEL
Granddad couldn't I just get a job? Maybe work with you down at the factory -

LLUIS enters from hallway door, and is standing behind MALCOLM.

LLUIS

Are they gone?

MALCOLM

(startled)

Ahhh! How did you get in here?

LLUIS

Houdini! Big bother is all over the building!

NATHANIEL

Pop Pop wants me to join the Mounties.

LLUIS

Damn, homes! You know Mounties are just Canadian pigs with funny hats, right?

MALCOLM

He needs to get away from here!

LLUIS

Why?

MALCOLM

So he'll be safe!

Pause.

NATHANIEL

(taken aback)

Safe?

MALCOLM

You know... safe... to lead the revolution!

LLUIS

Safe?

MALCOLM

You'll get back in there and learn their strategies -

LLUIS

Wait a minute - Is that what this has been about?

MALCOLM

What...?

NATHANIEL

The army, the navy, the Mounties - all just to keep me safe?

MALCOLM

Ummm... see... when I was in the Panthers -

LLUIS
And that's another thing: How old are you?

MALCOLM
What?

LLUIS
How old?

MALCOLM
Sixty...?

LLUIS
So, 1970, Panthers shooting it out with cops, you were... Fourteen?

MALCOLM
Thirteen. My birthday's in December -

LLUIS
Orale!

MALCOLM
Damn!

NATHANIEL
Wait... so that means -

MALCOLM
You see, the thing is -

NATHANIEL
Pop Pop?

MALCOLM
It means that -

LLUIS
What?

MALCOLM
The thing is I was I... I was never exactly in the Panthers -

LLUIS
But what about all your stories? You and Huey, "there you were -"

MALCOLM
(pitifully)
I saw him at a rally once...

NATHANIEL
What do you mean you were never a Panther?

MALCOLM
I can explain -

NATHANIEL
Explain? All these years you've been tellin' me -

MALCOLM
I just wanted you away from here -

NATHANIEL
You were lying!

MALCOLM
I just wanted to keep you safe.

LLUIS
Safe from what?

MALCOLM
SAFE FROM THEM! From all of them! This... this whole system is just a gun pointed at young Black men! I had to keep him from getting hurt.

NATHANIEL
I was in the army!

MALCOLM
It's safer for a Black man to be fightin' overseas then it is to be here at home, on these streets, with these cops!

NATHANIEL
And the Plan?

MALCOLM
Only plan I've ever had was to keep you alive.

NATHANIEL
Next you're gonna tell me folks didn't die in a shootout with the cops...

MALCOLM
Well...

NATHANIEL
Aw, hell naw!

MALCOLM
Car accident. They were out of diapers, they drove to the store.

NATHANIEL
So my whole life is a lie!

LLUIS
(to NATHANIEL)
Hey, look on the bright side - at least now you don't have the pressure of leading the revolution!

MALCOLM
I did what I had to!

NATHANIEL

Talkin' about you got to save me - You ain't saved me, you ain't saved nobody! You ain't done nothin! You're just a crazy old man who lyin' to himself about a plan when he ain't ever done a damn thing!

Song, "KEEP ALIVE".

MALCOLM

THERE YOU GO, THERE YOU GO

TALKIN' LIKE YOU THINK YOU KNOW!

CALL IT SMOKE, CALL IT LYIN'

UP ’TIL NOW IT WORKED JUST FINE.

I SEEN A MILLION WAYS A BROTHER CAN GO DOWN

ONLY PLAN THERE EVER WAS WAS KEEP YOU

ABOVE THE GROUND!

BOTTOM LINE, WHEN YOU'RE BLACK

GOT A TARGET ON YOUR BACK

TIPTOE 'ROUND THE WORLD AND TRY

TO KEEP ALIVE, JUST KEEP ALIVE.

GOTTA KNOW, IT'S NUTHIN' NEW

WHAT THEY GOT IN STORE FOR YOU

FIRST THING THAT YOU GOTTA DO IS

KEEP ALIVE, JUST KEEP ALIVE

KEEP ALIVE...

NATHANIEL angrily goes to front door.

MALCOLM

Where are you going?

NATHANIEL

Where can I go? I don't even know who I am!

NATHANIEL exits. LLUIS follows him to front door.

MALCOLM

Lluis...

After a moment a deeply disappointed LLUIS also exits apartment.

MALCOLM

I SEEN A MILLION WAYS

A BROTHER CAN GO DOWN

ONLY PLAN THERE EVER WAS WAS KEEP YOU 'BOVE

THE GROUND!

BOTTOM LINE, WHEN YOU'RE BLACK,

GOT A TARGET ON YOUR BACK!

TIPTOE 'ROUND THE WORLD AND TRY

TO KEEP ALIVE,

JUST KEEP ALIVE,

KEEP ALIVE…

MALCOLM exit through hallway door..

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM, Hugo Carbajal as LLUIS,
George P. Scott as Nathaniel Photo by Mike Melnyk

SCENE 6

THE POLICE STATION. IN FRONT OF AN OBVIOUSLY FAKE URBAN BACKDROP.

MILITIS enters, dressed as a little girl with afro-puffs.

MILITIS *(as child)*
Gee, I wish I had someone to play with! All my friends are at school, but school is for losers! I just want to play and have fun like the big kids. But I'm so lonely. Who will play with me?

From behind a pile of trash SNORFMAN appears. SNORFMAN is an extreme, cartoonish version of a Black drug dealer.

SNORFMAN
I'll play with you, little girl.

MILITIS *(as child)*
Gee, that's great! What should we play?

SNORFMAN
How about make-believe? What do you dream of being?

MILITIS *(as child)*
A princess! A movie star! Have my own reality show!

SNORFMAN
And so you shall, little girl. So you shall. I have the power to make people's dreams come true!

MILITIS *(as child)*
You do?

SNORFMAN
At least in their minds...

MILITIS (as child)
I'm Kanesha, what's your name?

SNORFMAN
Oh, I'm known by many names, but my friends call me - Snorf!

Song: "THE SNORFMAN".

SNORFMAN

I'M THE SNORF MAN,

I'M HERE FOR YOU.

MAKE A WISH, I'LL MAKE IT TRUE!

JUST ONE THING YOU GOTTA DO, OOH-OOH-OOH

Lisa Hori-Garcia as MILITIS, George P. Scott as SNORFMAN Photo by Rog Franklin

Lisa Hori-Garcia as MILITIS, Hugo Carbahal as CHIEF PARKER,
George P. Scott as SNORFMAN Photo by Mike Melnyk

JUST TRY ME, TRY ME...

FIRST TIME YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BUY ME!

TRY ME AND YOU'LL SEE HOW GREAT I AM,

THAT IRRESISTIBLE, HUG-AND-KISSABLE

SNORFMAN!

SNORFMAN and MILITIS (AS CHILD) do a short dance as SNORFMAN entices her. But just as SNORFMAN has her in his clutches CHIEF PARKER enters, wearing elaborate tactical policeman's gear.

CHIEF PARKER

Get your controlled substances off that child, you filthy drug!

SNORFMAN

NO, NO, NO! NO, NO, NO!

YOU CAN'T STOP THE SNORFMAN SHOW!

THE CHILD IS MINE AND YOU SHOULD KNOW

I WON'T LET GO 'TIL I TURN HER TO A SNORF HO!

MILITIS *(as child)*
(shocked)

Snorf ho?

SNORFMAN tries to grab CHILD, but CHIEF PARKER pulls out a gun and shoots SNORFMAN, who staggers.

CHIEF PARKER

Take that, you poison!

SNORFMAN recovers, and laughs. And continues to sing.

SNORFMAN

TRY TO POP A CAP ONLY MAKE THE SNORFMAN

LAUGH,

YOU'RE GONNA FEEL THE WRATH, C'MON DO THE

MATH –

YOU KNOW I'M EVERYWHERE AND

ALL AT ONCE,

WHILE YOU PULL YOUR LITTLE TRIGGERS AND YOU

TWIDDLE YOUR THUMBS!

SUCH A NOBLE CAUSE

WITH YOUR WEAK-ASS LAWS,

NIBBLE ON THE DEVIL WITH

A HAMSTER'S JAWS!

WELL, SPIN YOUR WHEEL IN YOUR

FINAL HOUR –

CUZ YOU AIN'T GOT NO...

FIREPOWER...

SNORFAN advances on CHIEF and MILITIS (AS CHILD) menacingly.

MILITIS *(as child)*
(frightened)
Gee, what will we do?

CHIEF PARKER
I don't know, little girl. If only we had a bigger, better weapon in the Fight Against Snorf...

Suddenly an armored car, the Freedomwagon, enters.

MILITIS *(as child)*
What's that?

The Freedomwagon stops, and MAYOR HENDERSON leans out of the window..

MAYOR HENDERSON
The answer to your prayers! It's the Freedomwagon 3000!

SNORFMAN
Ahhhh!

MAYOR HENDERSON fires a terrible volley, wounding SNORFMAN terribly. SNORFMAN stumbles away.

SNORFMAN
I'll... be... baaaaaack...

SNORFMAN exits.

MILITIS *(as child)*
Gee, thanks for saving me from being a SNORF-ho!

MAYOR HENDERSON
Don't thank me, little girl, thank the Freedomwagon!

CHIEF PARKER
It's bullet proof, mine resistant, topped with a machine gun, can drive through a wall - and isn't on the President's list of weapons local police can't use!

MILITIS *(as child)*
Thank you, Freedomwagon!

MAYOR HENDERSON
Yes, thank you, Freedomwagon!

CHIEF PARKER
But is it enough, Mayor Henderson?

MAYOR HENDERSON
I don't know, Chief Parker. The War on Snorf, like the war on every other drug, will be long and difficult, and scary. Very, very scary.

CHIEF PARKER
It may take decades -

MAYOR HENDERSON
It may take hundreds of millions of dollars -

CHIEF PARKER
(suggestively)
It may even take a helicopter -

MILITIS (as child)
But if everybody out there does their part-

ALL
We will win!

Triumphant music, and the three hit a tableau.

V.O.
Cut!

The backdrop is removed, revealing the police station.

MAYOR HENDERSON
How was it?

V.O.
That was beautiful, people!

MAYOR HENDERSON
I'm sorry, I dropped my line about what Snorf does to kids -

V.O.
That's okay, we'll fix it in post!

MILITIS
(as herself)
Chief Parker, why do I have to dress like a little Black girl?

MAYOR HENDERSON
(correcting her)
A little ethnically ambiguous girl.

MILITIS
Why can't we just tell people how bad SNORF is? I mean, they're not stupid.

CHIEF PARKER
Doesn't work that way, officer. You tell somebody something is bad they're likely to run over and use it.

MAYOR HENDERSON
I know I would.

CHIEF PARKER
But you make people afraid, then at least you can tell them which way to run. You control them - and that's the only way to save them. And you do want to save people, don't you Officer?

MILITIS
Of course I do.

CHIEF PARKER
Then you have to be willing to scare 'em.

MILITIS
Can I get out of this schoolgirl costume now?

CHIEF PARKER
(flirtatiously)
Why? I think you look rather fetching in it...

NATHANIEL enters.

NATHANIEL
I hope I'm not interrupting.

MILITIS
Sarge!

NATHANIEL
They said you were done -

MILITIS
What are you doing here?

NATHANIEL
I was thinking about what you said, about Law and Order, and I came down to say... where do I sign up?

CHIEF PARKER

Good man!

MAYOR HENDERSON

I'm Mayor Henderson, good to see we'll have another n...(looking at at Nate - a Black man, realizing what he came close to saying, corrects himself) ...eighborhood man on the force! Welcome!

NATHANIEL

Thanks.

CHIEF PARKER

Right this way, and we'll start that paperwork.

MAYOR and CHIEF exit.

MILITIS

Sarge... I gotta say, you seemed kinda against the idea before.

NATHANIEL

I was.

MILITIS

Why'd you change your mind?

NATHANIEL

(bitterly)

My granddaddy. He said he wanted me somewhere... safe.

MILITIS exits.

reprise: "ALL I WANT".

NATHANIEL

I JUST WANT A LITTLE HOUSE

ON A QUIET SIDE OF TOWN

AND A JOB TO GO TO EVERY DAY

AND A SAFE PLACE FOR KIDS TO PLAY

I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY...

(angrily)

I can't wait to see the look on the old liar's face!

NATHANIEL exits.

The Mime Troupe also performs indoors when touring. These photos are from the 2016 tour of Freedomland at St. Mary's College, Maryland.

with Keith Arcugari, Lisa Hori-Garcia, Lizzie Calogero, Michael Gene Sullivan, George P. Scott, Victor Toman

SCENE 7

SPLIT SCENE: AN AUDITORIUM, AND A POLICE TRAINING ROOM

On a platform on one side of the stage is a platform with a podium. The rest of the stage is a training classroom at the police academy. CHIEF PARKER enters, and addresses the crowd from behind a podium.

CHIEF PARKER
Cadets! Welcome to your first day at the police academy. As I look out at you I see good, decent people ready to help their community. Well, you may be law-abiding citizens now, but in just four weeks you will all be transformed into police officers! Before we begin your training let's hear a few words from the star of a previous class, Officer Emily Militis!

CHIEF PARKER exits as MILITIS steps to the podium..

MILITIS
(to audience)
The Police Officer's Code of Ethics: "As a Law Enforcement Officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice."

(This is a split scene, with MILITiS remaining off to the side, in a different time and place, throughout.).

A training room at the academy. CADET and Nathaniel enter. Both are dressed in the uniform of officers in training, and have holstered pistols. The CADET is very excited and enthusiastic.

CADET
(excitedly pretending to shoot)
BAM!BAM!BAM!BAM!
(sings)
"Bad Boys, Bad Boys, whatcha gonna do, whatcha gonna do when they come for you?"
(speaking)
Will Smith, Martin Lawrence, Bad Boys, 1997. (to NATHANIEL) So, whatcha packing?

NATHANIEL
What?

CADET
Heat!! "They bring a knife, you bring a gun!" The Untouchables, 1987 I got a GLOCK 35, an AR-15 - birthday present - and this right here: .22 Magnum. "Blow your head clean off!" Dirty Harry, 1971.

NATHANIEL
Nice.

CADET
(lovingly)
I would have sex with this gun if I could.

CHIEF PARKER enters.

CHIEF PARKER
Simmer down, rookies. Let's start with the role of the Police Officer. Question One!

NATHANIEL and CADET sit, pull out notebooks and pencils.

CHIEF PARKER
What is the only thing that stands between the civilized and the savages?

CADET puts up his hand, CHIEF PARKER calls on him.

CADET
(stands and shouts)
THE THIN BLUE LINE!

CHIEF PARKER
That's right!

CADET sits, smiling.

CHIEF PARKER
The police - protecting citizens from the sickness on the streets.

CADET stands

CADET
"This town has a cancer. The cancer is crime!"

CADET sits

CADET
(to NATHANIEL)
Robocop, 1987.

NATHANIEL puts up his hand.

CHIEF PARKER
Yes?

NATHANIEL
(stands)
But they're not a disease, they're people, they're citizens, people.

CADET stands

CADET
"In the third millennium the world changed, the laws collapsed! And out of the chaos rose a new order... and they were judge, jury, and executioner all in one!"

CADET
(to NATHANIEL)
Judge Dredd, 1995

CHIEF PARKER
Haywood, there are only two sides when it comes to crime - us, and them. Cops and criminals. We are us, they are them -

CADET
And them is everyone who isn't us.

NATHANIEL
So everyone who isn't a cop is a criminal?

CHIEF PARKER
Of course not! They're potential criminals.

NATHANIEL raises hand. CHIEF PARKER does not acknowledge NATHANIEL.

CHIEF PARKER
That's all for today.

CHIEF PARKER exits, as NATHANIEL and the CADET fill in their notebooks. In her separate time/place MILITIS addresses the audience again.

MILITIS
(to audience)
"I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn, or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the laws of the land and the regulations of my department."

In the training room.

CADET
(to NATHANIEL)
You were in the Army?! You have gone from the front lines to the front lines. BAM! Joined right after 9/11?

NATHANIEL
I was 10 years old.

CADET
BAM, BAM, BAM, Osama! They wouldn't let me in... failed some test or something. How many towelheads did you smoke?

NATHANIEL
What?

CADET
You can tell me, killer.

NATHANIEL
Killer?

CHIEF PARKER enters.

CHIEF PARKER
Today we will talk about brotherhood - the Brotherhood in Blue. When you are on the street what is the one thing you can depend on?

NATHANIEL
The law?

CADET
A rocket launcher?

CHIEF PARKER
Your fellow officers. You have to watch your brother officer's back on the streets, and in the station. They are the only real shield you have.

NATHANIEL
But what if an officer does something wrong? Shouldn't we report it?

CHIEF PARKER
Of course you should! No one is above the law! But you gotta think, when you're out there, bad guy around every corner, are you gonna rely on some law, or on the brother officer that you just reported? The Bad Guys don't have rules. All these laws that protect the criminals -

CADET
"The laws are crazy!" Dirty Harry.

NATHANIEL
The laws are there to protect the innocent.

CHIEF PARKER
Nobody is innocent.

NATHANIEL
But -

CADET leaps to his feet.

CADET
"I am the Law!"

Cadet and CHIEF PARKER
Judge Dredd!

NATHANIEL
Chief Parker -

CHIEF PARKER
Dismissed!

CHIEF PARKER exits, as NATHANIEL and the CADET fill in their notebooks again.. In her separate time/place MILITIS addresses the audience again.

MILITIS
(to audience)
"I will never act officiously, or permit personal feelings or prejudices to influence my decisions. I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence."

In the training room.

CADET
(very excited)
Target practice! So, what do you think: center of mass, or head shot? Center is easier, but a head shot and they go down! Like zombies, you gotta hit 'em between the eyes!

CHIEF PARKER enters.

CHIEF PARKER
Can anyone tell me a situation in which an officer is justified in drawing his weapon?

NATHANIEL raises his hand.

CHIEF PARKER
Yes?

NATHANIEL
When a suspect is pointing a weapon at an officer.

CHIEF PARKER
Yes...

CADET raises his hand. CHIEF PARKER calls on him.

CADET
When a suspect is preparing to point a weapon at an officer.

NATHANIEL raises his hand. CHIEF PARKER calls on him.

NATHANIEL
When a suspect is threatening a victim or hostage with a weapon.

CADET raises his hand. CHIEF PARKER calls on him.

CADET
When a suspect is considering threatening a victim or hostage with a weapon.

NATHANIEL
How could you know what a suspect is considering doing?

CADET raises his hand. CHIEF PARKER calls on him.

CADET
When a suspect is about to harm a victim, hostage, officer, or themselves.

NATHANIEL
Themselves?

CHIEF PARKER
Suicide is a felony in this state.

CADET
They start with suicide, and after that who knows what they'll do!

NATHANIEL raises hand. CHIEF PARKER does not call on NATHANIEL.

CHIEF PARKER
Even if a suspect doesn't have a weapon, isn't a threat, or isn't even a suspect they should still be regarded as dangerous if they fall within certain guidelines.

NATHANIEL
You can't tell if someone is dangerous just by how they look.

CHIEF PARKER
You can if you want to stay alive! Body language, how they're talking, how baggy their pants are - there are a thousand clues that tell an officer they must use deadly force. Notebooks down. On your feet. Weapons at the ready!

George P. Scott as NATHANIEL, Michael Gene Sullivan as CADET, Hugo Carbajal as PARKER
Photo by Rog Franklin

NATHANIEL and CADET assume attack positions, and enact CHIEF PARKER'S scenario as he narrates it. The CHIEF is clearly caught up in his narration as he tries to frighten to rookies.

CHIEF PARKER

Okay... you're on the street. It's dark. Everything is black. There's nothing but black all around you... it's like the darkest jungle. You can hear the monkeys in the trees - listening to their music... You are surrounded by a deadly, dark blackness that is just waiting to strike you down! Suddenly you hear a sound!

Suddenly a target appears. It is an Black Man with a gun. CADET fires repeatedly. NATHANIEL doesn't fire.

CHIEF PARKER

Haywood, what's the problem?

NATHANIEL

That target - it looks like Teddy...

CHIEF PARKER

Who?

NATHANIEL

A guy I grew up with.

CHIEF PARKER

So you don't want to use this target? I understand. After all, you're from the "community." Let's try a different one, okay?

NATHANIEL

Yeah...

CHIEF PARKER

Weapons at the ready!

NATHANIEL and CADET assume attack positions again.

CHIEF PARKER

Okay - It's dark. You're in an alley. You and your brother officer are surrounded by a hellishly dark blackness. You hear a sound, you turn! Blackness! But then, in the ebony shadows, holding a gun... behind by your partner!

A target appears of a young Black boy with a water gun appears behind the CADET. NATHANIEL turns and aims, but doesn't fire.

NATHANIEL

It's a kid!

CADET

So?

CHIEF PARKER

So you left your partner to be killed.

CADET

You let me down, bro!

NATHANIEL

But that might be a toy gun.

CHIEF PARKER

Or it might be real! You don't have time to think about that!

NATHANIEL

Why do all the targets have to be Black?

CHIEF PARKER

They were on sale. But if that's bothering you, we'll try something different... It's dark -

NATHANIEL

And why does it always have to be dark?

CHIEF PARKER

You're right, good point... weapons at the ready!

NATHANIEL and CADET assume attack positions again.

CHIEF PARKER

Okay... it's... (forcing himself) evening. Just getting... dark. You're in a net of almost blackness... suddenly you hear shouting and chanting, the sound of boots in the streets, you smell tear gas, burning cars! Brother officers are begging for back-up on the radio! You run to help! You trip! You get up! You run around a corner and see - !

A target of a young White woman holding an "occupy" sign appears. CADET shoots it repeatedly. NATHANIEL hold fire.

NATHANIEL

Damn!

CHIEF PARKER

Haywood!

NATHANIEL

All she has is a protest sign!

CHIEF PARKER

You see a sign, I see a stick! A big stick!

NATHANIEL

We can't shoot people for protesting!

CADET

"Yippie ki-ya, mother-"

NATHANIEL
(to CADET)
Would you shut up!

CADET
But... Die Hard...

NATHANIEL
Sir, I think I need to take a break.

CHIEF PARKER
Okay, Haywood. Take ten, and we'll try again.

NATHANIEL
Thank you, sir.

NATHANIEL leaves.

CADET
What about me?

CHIEF PARKER
(enjoys snapping back into danger mode)
It's dark! (The CADET assumes attack position) You're in a dark building, surrounded by blackness. There's dark, black, black darkness around every corner. You come to a door. It's dark! Who knows what's behind it... You take a deep breath - you kick it in - !

A target that looks like MALCOLM appears. CADET aims pistol at target, then CHIEF and CADET freeze. MILITIS, in her time/ place, addresses the audience.

MILITIS
(to audience)
"I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held as long as I am true to the ethics of the police service. I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself to my chosen profession law enforcement."

In training room CADET shoots target repeatedly.

CHIEF PARKER
Good job! Dismissed.

CADET and CHIEF exit training room.

MILITIS
Welcome - to your Police Force.

MILITIS exits auditorium.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as MILITIS Photo by Rog Franklin

SCENE 8

MALCOLM'S APARTMENT.

Quiet. After a moment the front door opens, and MALCOLM enters. He's dressed for travel, and has luggage. He wearily puts his bag down for a moment, and takes off his coat, starts to settle in. After a quick look around he gets his bag, and exits through hallway door.

MALCOLM
(offstage)
Goddammit, Lluis!

MALCOLM re-enters, followed by LLUIS, who is wearing a MALCOLM's bathrobe.

LLUIS
Oh, man, I'm sorry!

MALCOLM
I leave town for one month -

LLUIS
They cut off the gas in my place, it's freezing! I didn't know you were coming back today!

GLADYS
(*offstage*)
Lluis, honey!

MALCOLM
Obviously.

A middle-aged woman, GLADYS, enters, She is putting the final touches on getting dressed.

GLADYS
Is everything alright?

LLUIS
Yes!

MALCOLM
No!

LLUIS
Everything is fine. Malcolm, this is Gladys. She teaches salsa at the community center.

MALCOLM
You already know how to dance.

LLUIS
I do... but sometimes even my hips need a little reminding! (to GLADYS) This is Malcolm.

GLADYS *(puts out a hand to shake).*
Oh, I've heard so much about you! Thank you so much for letting Lluis use your apartment while his place is being re-decorated.

MALCOLM
Re-decorated?

LLUIS
I got some posters.

GLADYS
Lluis told me about your trip. Visiting your daughter's grave -

MALCOLM
Yeah.

GLADYS
That's so sweet.

LLUIS
Gladys, shouldn't you get back to the class?

GLADYS
You're right - Gotta get back before one of the other teachers tries to grab my cumbia!

LLUIS
Speaking of which -

LLUIS exits through hallway door, returning holding a red teddy.

LLUIS
Don't forget this!

GLADYS
(kissing LLUIS on the cheek)
Thanks, sweetie!

LUIS and Gladys suddenly do a short, uptempo salsa, ending with a deep dip.

GLADYS
Nice meeting you, Malcolm.

LLUIS
I'll see you tomorrow.

GLADYS exits apartment.

MALCOLM
In his own apartment!

MALCOLM
Lluis, I have to sleep on those sheets!

LLUIS
Those are my sheets. Yours are clean and folded in the closet.

MALCOLM
Good!

LLUIS
Though you might want to get a new pillow.

MALCOLM
Aw, man!

LLUIS
Hey, how was the trip?

MALCOLM
Same as every year: a bus ride, a cab ride, a cemetery. Only this time... I didn't know what to say.

LLUIS
You could have told them he's safe.

MALCOLM
Is he? All this time... pretending like I was planning a revolution to save him -

LLUIS
Maybe you had the right plan, you just didn't know it.

MALCOLM
What do you mean?

LLUIS
Maybe the best way too save one Black man is to save all of 'em.

MALCOLM
Sounds like a lot of work.

LLUIS
Save everyone's grandson, Malcolm, you save your own.

The front door bursts open, and COP 2 leaps in. Screaming, guns drawn.

COP 2
FREEZE!

MALCOLM and LLUIS put their hands up.

MALCOLM
What is wrong with you people!

MILITIS enters.

MILITIS
Stand down! (to COP 2) Go check the next unit.

COP 2 exits.

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood -

LLUIS
(as Shulman)
Ah, you're just in time for -

MILITIS
(panicked)
PINOCLE! NO! Mr. Haywood, let's just correct the database once and for all. Where's your ID?

MALCOLM
It's in my suitcase.

MALCOLM and MILITIS exit through hallway door. LLUIS goes to exit the apartment, but another balaclava wearing COP nervously enters. LLUIS quickly becomes Shulman again.

LLUIS
Well, hello young man! (unable to see through balaclava) It is man, isn't it?

COP nods.

LLUIS
You seem tense. I know what will calm you down... a nice game of... PINOCLE!

COP doesn't react.

LLUIS
I said PINOCLE! If you stick around we can play... PINOCLE!

No response. LLUIS is confused about how his secret weapon has failed.

LLUIS
(to himself)
Uh-oh, maybe I'll have to switch to Canasta. (to COP) Anyway, I'll just go up to my room. Goodnight, young man.

LLUIS goes to front door.

NATHANIEL
Goodnight, Lluis.

LLUIS exits, returns.

LLUIS
(as himself)
What?

NATHANIEL
Nothing... sir.

LLUIS
What did you say?

NATHANIEL
I didn't say anything!

LLUIS snatches off the COP'S balaclava, revealing NATHANIEL.

LLUIS
(as himself)
NATE!

NATHANIEL
Shhhh! Where's granddad?

LLUIS
In the bedroom. What are you doing here?

NATHANIEL
The orders came to take down some SNORFlord! How's Pop Pop doing?

LLUIS
Fine. Though seeing his grandson dressed like a storm trooper should kill him.

NATHANIEL
I just wanted a job, some security -

LLUIS
You just wanted to get back at him. So he lied to you. So what? When I first came to this town I had nothing. Your granddad lied to get me the place upstairs, lied to get me jobs at the sofa factory -

Unseen by the two men MILITIS and MALCOLM have re-entered the room

LLUIS
- Hid me from La Migra. Maybe he lied to you - but he lied for me! He's a good man, Nate. In a country as insane as this one maybe lying is the only way to take care of people.

NATHANIEL
Lluis...

MILITIS
Lluis?

LLUIS sees MILITIS.

LLUIS
(as Shulman)
Officer Militis! I... I was just telling this fine young man about... pinocle!

MILITIS pulls out iPad.

MILITIS
Lluis... Gutierrez?

MALCOLM
No, it's Shulman -

MILITIS
Undocumented immigrant, thirty years in the United States - you lied to me!

LLUIS
No -

MILITIS
To think - I considered playing pinocle with you!

NATHANIEL
Corporal, he hasn't done anything wrong.

MILITIS
For all you know he could be the SNORFlord we're looking for!

LLUIS
(as himself)
I am not selling SNORF!

MILITIS
Why should I believe you?
(she pulls out handcuffs)
Hands behind your back!

MILITIS cuffs LLUIS.

MALCOLM
Lluis!

MILITIS
Mr. Haywood - if that is your name - I'd advise you to keep your mouth shut. From what I've heard you are guilty of harboring a fugitive.

MALCOLM
(seeing NATHANIEL)
Nate, what have you done?

NATHANIEL
Granddaddy, I was, it wasn't -

LLUIS
It wasn't his fault, Malcolm.

MILITIS
Come on, Gutierrez - down to the station. And keep your nose clean.

NATHANIEL
Granddaddy -

MILITIS
Nate... Haywood! Come on, I want you to drive.

MILITIS leads LLUIS out the front door. NATHANIEL looks at MALCOLM, who after a moment drops his gaze in totally disgust and disappointment, and exits through hallway door. After a moment NATHANIEL exits after MILITIS.

SCENE 9

ON THE STREET.

The Freedomwagon rumbles into view. After a moment it comes to a stop, and MILITIS comes out, holding her cellphone above her head, trying to improve reception.

MILITIS
Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Yes, Chief, that's better. Yes, Lluis Gutierrez. Male, Hispanic... yes. Apparently he'd been living here for some time. I ordered the squad to comb the neighborhood while we brought him in. Me and cadet Haywood, we're bringing Gutierrez to the station now.

Unseen by MILITIS the Freedomwagon moves a few feet from her.

MiLITIS
We should be there in a few minutes -

The Freedomwagon moves a few more feet.

MILITIS
I think he did a fine job, sir. A little more training, a little more discipline, and he'll be a very good addition to the force.

A few more feet.

MILITIS
Well, thank you very much, sir! If there's one thing I like it's military precision. That way nothing gets by you.

The Freedomwagon pulls away, exits. MILITIS notices it's gone.

MILITIS
Hey! uhhh... sir, can I call you back? No, it's fine. I just have to run!

MILITIS hangs up phone, runs after Freedomwagon.

MILITIS
Hey! Come back!

MILITIS exits. NATHANIEL and LLUIS enter from another direction. NATHANIEL removes LLUIS' handcuffs.

LLUIS
You sure about this?

NATHANIEL
Hell no! Lluis, I'm so sorry.

LLUIS

Wasn't your fault mijo. In the end even Houdini got caught. Besides, if the police only arrested criminals what would they do with all their free time? Don't worry, Nate - it's not the first time I've had to start over. I ever tell you I was a dog groomer in San Diego for a while?

NATHANIEL

What?

LLUIS

Sold vacuum cleaners in Toledo, picked blueberries in Michigan -

NATHANIEL

I'll miss you, Lluis.

LLUIS

I'll miss you, too. I'll miss this place, miss your grandad, miss Gladys, miss her cumbia...

NATHANIEL

So, where are you gonna go?

LLUIS

Where?

Song, "I DON'T KNOW".

LLUIS

I DON'T KNOW,

I DON'T KNOW,

I SUPPOSE THERE'S ALWAYS

SOMEPLACE TO GO.

A FRESH START, A NEW DAY

AIN'T THAT WHAT I'M S'POSED TO SAY?

SIXTEEN YEARS IN THIS BEAUTIFUL

HARD-LUCK TOWN,

THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD RUN

WHEN THEY'RE TRYING TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

AS FOR ME, I KNOW THERE'S SOMEPLACE

SOMEWHERE...

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?

WHAT YOU GONNA DO?

WHAT YOU GONNA DO?

LLUIS

What are you going to do, mijo?

NATHANIEL

I DON'T KNOW,

I DON'T KNOW,

YOU MIGHT JUST HAVE A SIDEKICK

WHEN YOU HIT THE ROAD.

A FRESH START, A NEW DAY,

IT AIN'T HERE, ANYWAY –

LLUIS AND NATHANIEL

NOTHING LEFT IN THIS

CRAZY HARD-LUCK TOWN,

WHERE YOU FALL BEHIND

JUST TRYING TO HOLD YOUR GROUND.

YOU TRY YOUR BEST TO DO YOU BEST,

BUT THAT AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH I GUESS.

NATHANIEL

START IT ALL AGAIN,

LLUIS

WONDER WHERE IT ENDS...

NATHANIEL

I DON'T KNOW,

LLUIS

YO NO SE,

NATHANIEL

YO NO SE.

LLUIS

Adios, mijo.

LLUIS leaves. NATHANIEL exits in the other direction.

Michael Gene Sullivan as MALCOLM Photo by Mike Melnyk

SCENE 10

MALCOLM'S APARTMENT.

MALCOLM, depressed enters, with his burrito on a plate. He sits on the couch and tries to eat, but can't. He picks up his television remote, turns on the TV.

MANUEL
(TV voice-over)
Oh, Graciela!

MALCOLM, even more depressed, snaps off the TV. After a moment there is a knock on the front door. It opens, and NATHANIEL enters.

NATHANIEL
What, you don't answer the door anymore?

MaLCOLM
Nate?

NATHANIEL
Pop pop.

MALCOLM
(disdainfully)
Whatchu want?

NATHANIEL
I came back to tell you - I let Lluis go.

MALCOLM
(hopefully)
You did?

NATHANIEL
Yeah.

MALCOLM
Where is he?

NATHANIEL
He said he had to move on, start up someplace new.

MALCOLM
What about you? You gonna tell them he escaped?

NATHANIEL
I ain't gonna tell them nothin'. I'm taking off, too.

MALCOLM
Leavin'?

NATHANIEL
You were right, Pop pop. There ain't nothin' here for me.

MALCOLM
You goin' back to the Army?

NATHANIEL
Naw.

MALCOLM
Where?

NATHANIEL
There's gotta be someplace where a Black man can be... safe.

MALCOLM
In America?

NATHANIEL
What are we supposed to do?

MALCOLM
(pitifully)
First things first: I'm sorry I lied to you.

NATHANIEL
It's okay, Pop Pop. Country like this, maybe lying is the only way to take care of people. What's the second thing?

MALCOLM
(determinedly)
Revolution!

NATHANIEL
Oh, god! Not The Plan!

MALCOLM
No, no! This is different! Before it wasn't real, I was just using the words. Now I know: Ain't none of us gonna be safe unless everything changes for everyone.

NATHANIEL
So - whatchu gonna do?

MALCOLM
Paperwork! Leaflets and petitions. Make sure people know their rights, make sure these politicians and police remember that they work for us. And if they don't get it -

NATHANIEL
(becoming excited)
Take it up a notch! Ain't no peace without justice, and justice without jobs. Fat cats gettin' rich off us being poor, then sic the police on us when we sell some weed to make ends meet. Naw, bring some jobs up in here-

MALCOLM
-and you ain't talkin' just minimum wage MacDonald's jobs -

NATHANIEL
And all this mess ends. 'Til then, we boycott their crap! And if that don't work-

MALCOLM
The gloves come off. This is a life or death fight -

NATHANIEL
And we can't be the only ones not fightin."

MALCOLM puts his arm around NATHANIEL's shoulder.

MALCOLM
By any means necessary.

MALCOLM and NATHANIEL embrace. Suddenly three COPS enter the apartment.

COP 1
Freeze!

MALCOLM
Hell no!

COP 2
Hands on your heads!

This time MALCOLM refuses to put his hands up.

NATHANIEL
Pop pop -

COP 1
Nathaniel Haywood, you are under arrest -

MALCOLM
Get the hell outta my house!

COP 1
As an accessory to the SNORFlord Lluis Guterierez -

MALCOLM
(indicating NATE)
He didn't do nothin'!

COP 2
We have witnesses that saw him let the criminal go!

MALCOLM
I said get out!

COP 1

Shut up!

NATHANIEL

Don't yell at my grandfather!

COP 1

I said hands on your heads!

COP 1 grabs NATHANIEL, tries to restrain him.

MALCOLM

Don't touch him!

MALCOLM, who still has the TV remote in his hand, grabs COP 1, who wrestles away.COP 2 sees remote in MALCOLM's hand, mistakes it for a gun.

COP 2

Gun!

Gunshots start from COP 2, joined by COP 1, as both MALCOLM and NATHANIEL are shot and killed.

MIlITIS

(from offstage)

No! No!

MILITIS enters, at a run, but too late, and sees MALCOLM and NATHANIEL dead. She is clearly shaken and very upset. She looks at their bodies ass the other two COPS freeze. After a moment MILITIS steps onto the podium platform and into a different time, where she is making a report about the shooting to an unseen police panel. She has a hard time holding her emotions in check.

MILITIS

Sir...The tragic deaths of Mr. Malcolm Haywood and Mr. Nathaniel Haywood at 1355 Washington Street were... the police officers at the scene performed their duty, followed all the protocols, did what they were supposed to... Sir, I know my fellow officers reported seeing a weapon, but I didn't see it. But perhaps... (finally accepting the rationalization) I missed it. I'm sure they wouldn't have fired without cause. We would never do that. The Police protect and serve. We bring... order.

After a moment NATE stands up, looks at MILITIS.

Song, "HOW CAN WE LIVE (Finale).

NATHANIEL

HOW CAN YOU LIVE?

HOW CAN YOU LIVE?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

MALCOLM stands up, addresses the audience.

MALCOLM

HOW CAN YOU LIVE?

HOW CAN YOU LIVE?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

LUIS enters, addresses audience.

LLUIS

THE TRUTH IS BROKEN

SHATTERED INTO PIECES

MILITIS
(to audience)

TIME TO SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS

TIME TO FLOOD INTO THE STREETS

MILITIS AND LLUIS

YEAH, THEY'D RATHER SEE US STARING

AT OUR TV OR OUR PHONE

OR STARING COLD AND LIFELESS

MILITIS, LLUIS, MALCOLM

CUZ WE REALLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN

ALL

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

IN A WORLD LIKE THIS?

IN A WORLD LIKE THIS?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

IN A TIME LIKE THIS?

IN A TIME LIKE THIS?

NATHANIEL

THE TIME IS UPON US,

TO FINALLY STAND OUR GROUND

ALL

IN FREEDOMLAND, IN FREEDOMLAND,

NATHANIEL

THEY'RE FREE TO GUN US DOWN!

MALCOLM

AND LONG AS IT'S SOMEBODY ELSE

WE'RE FREE TO LOOK AWAY,

WHILE THEY SAY OUR LIVES DON'T MATTER –

ALL

SAY OUR LIVES DON'T MATTER,

SAY OUR LIVES DON'T MATTER!

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

WITH A LIE LIKE THAT?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

HOW CAN WE LIVE?

WITH A WORLD LIKE THIS?

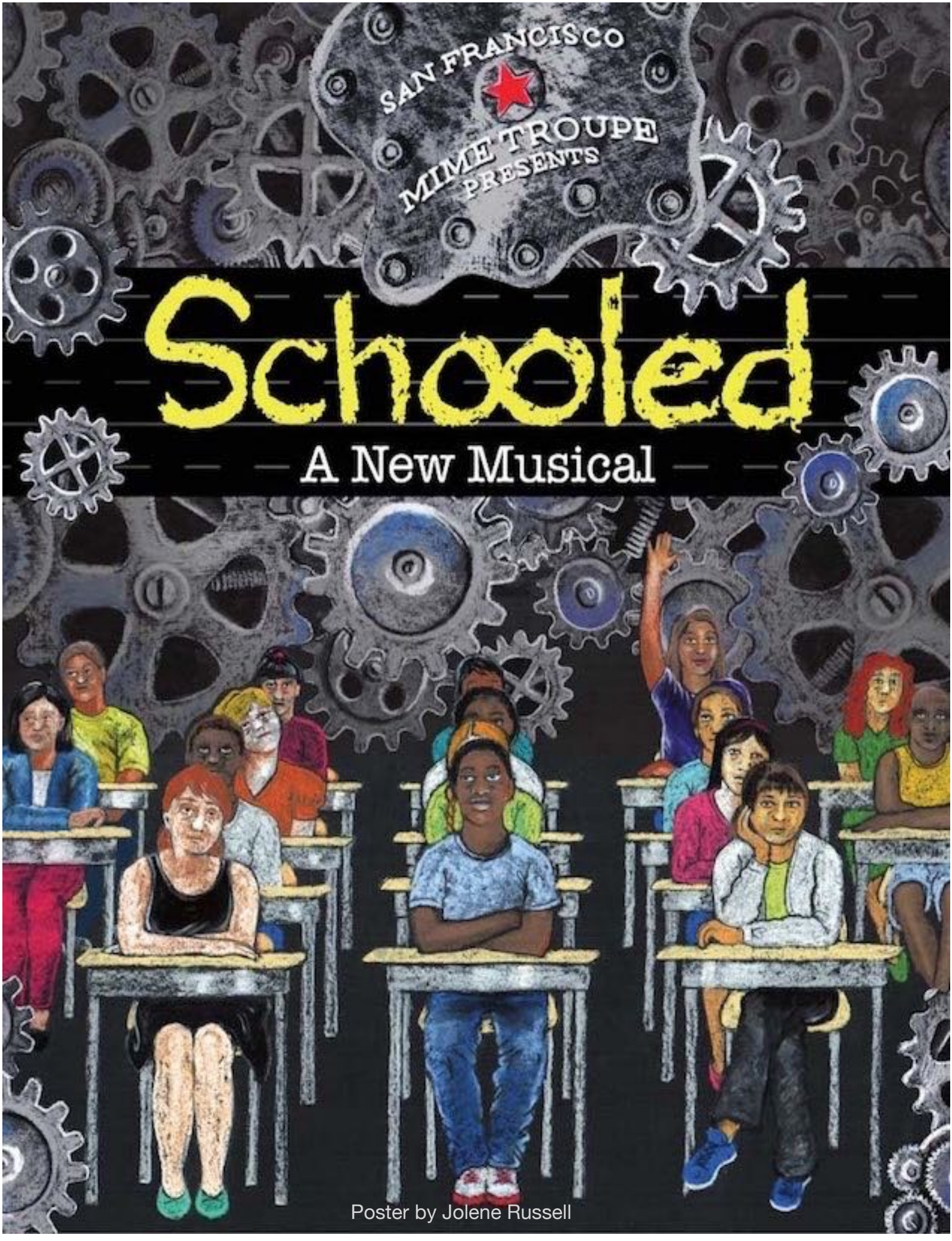
WITH A WORLD LIKE THIS?

End of play

The CAST Photo by Rog Franklin

Schooled

Script by Michael Gene Sullivan, Eugenie Chan
Music and Lyrics by Ira Marlowe


SAN FRANCISCO
MIME TROUPE
PRESENTS
Schooled
A New Musical
Poster by Jolene Russell

2016 was a weird year.

It just was.

We were saying goodbye to a popular and deeply hated President. Loved and reviled by Capitalists, lionized and distrusted by workers, the first Black President was viewed as differently as up and down, good or bad, Black or White.

But at least he wasn't insane.

So… at this key moment of economic recovery, who would the American people elect to succeed him? With climate change, a crumbling infrastructure, troops under fire around the world, Guantanamo still open, factories closing - who could be trusted to be the calm, intelligent, farseeing and steady hand on the helm of the ship of state? In the election of 2016 the choices were stark:

A middle-of-the-road-Liberal Capitalist who promised more of the same,

A feisty New Deal Democratic Socialist with wild hair and a waving finger,

And a bombastic businessman with a history of moral and financial bankruptcy
Surely Americans would make the most rational choice.

Well…

While "Schooled" is a critique of the privatization of the American educational system it is also about what vision of American government the people want: a public-private partnership, corporate government run for profit, or is a for-profit business mindset on any level antithetical to government of, by, and for the People? And are schools where we make not consumers or worker-drones, but citizens? What does a Democracy lose when every service is for profit, and when our future citizens are taught by corporations what will they really learn?

"This storyline contains some bits of sharp satire, teaching the important lesson that when you put voracious corporate interests in charge of education, what they teach is only whatever most benefits voracious corporate interests, illustrated in the school's speedy transformation into a kind of totalitarian training camp. At the same time, the play morphs into a parody of the 2016 presidential election…"
MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

"In "Schooled," the San Francisco Mime Troupe argues that the purpose of education is to build citizens, to prepare young adults to make informed decisions in their civic life. The company's free summer show of its 57th season also makes a compelling case that art is foundational to a healthy democracy."
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Michiko
Estelle
Arthur Quisdedo
Ethel Orocuru
Fredersen J. Babbit
Tatiana

SCHOOLED opened on July 4th, 2016, in Dolores Park, San Francisco, California.
The production was directed by Michael Gene Sullivan with the following cast:

Michiko, Fredersen J. Babbit……Lisa Hori-Garcia*
Estelle, Lavinia Jones……Velina Brown*
Arthur Quisdedo, Thomas Jones…….Rotimi Agbabiaka*
Ethel Orocuru, Tatiana……Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro*
*indicates membership in Actor's Equity Association

SCENE 1

THE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM OF AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL: ELENOR ROOSEVELT HIGH.

There is a podium, a flag, and posters with the school logo - a friendly honey badger. (note: the original set had an upstage revolve with three different sections - Multi-purpose room, Babbit's Office, Classroom. and the stage directions will often reflect that with mention of "rotate on" or "rotate off.") Four high school STUDENTS enter, and face the audience. They are giggly and nervous. One of them pulls out a pitch pipe and blows a note.

Song: "ROOSEVELT, O ROOSEVELT"

STUDENTS

ROOSEVELT, O ROOSEVELT

THE HONEY BADGERS ROAR

ROOSEVELT, OUR ROOSEVELT

WE'RE LOYAL EVERMORE

MARCHING WITH MAROON AND WHITE

STRONG AND PROUD,

BOLD AND BRIGHT,

DAYS WE'LL TREASURE AS THE YEARS GO BY.

ROOSEVELT, O ROOSEVELT. O ROOSEVELT

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HIGH!

Three of the STUDENTS exit. One of the students, MICHIKO, crosses to behind the podium to address the assembly. She is energetic, positive, and upbeat - when she can be.

MICHIKO
(to audience)
Okay, everyone, quiet down!

MICHIKO pulls out a piece of paper, reads.

MICHIKO (CONT'D)
Parents, teachers, and students - as student body president it is my honor to welcome you to the Eleanor Roosevelt High School mid-semester assembly! Today we have a special guest, but first I have a couple of announcements to the student body: First: The 3rd floor boys bathroom is still flooded, which means the second floor library is still dripping. So unless you're doing research on intestinal

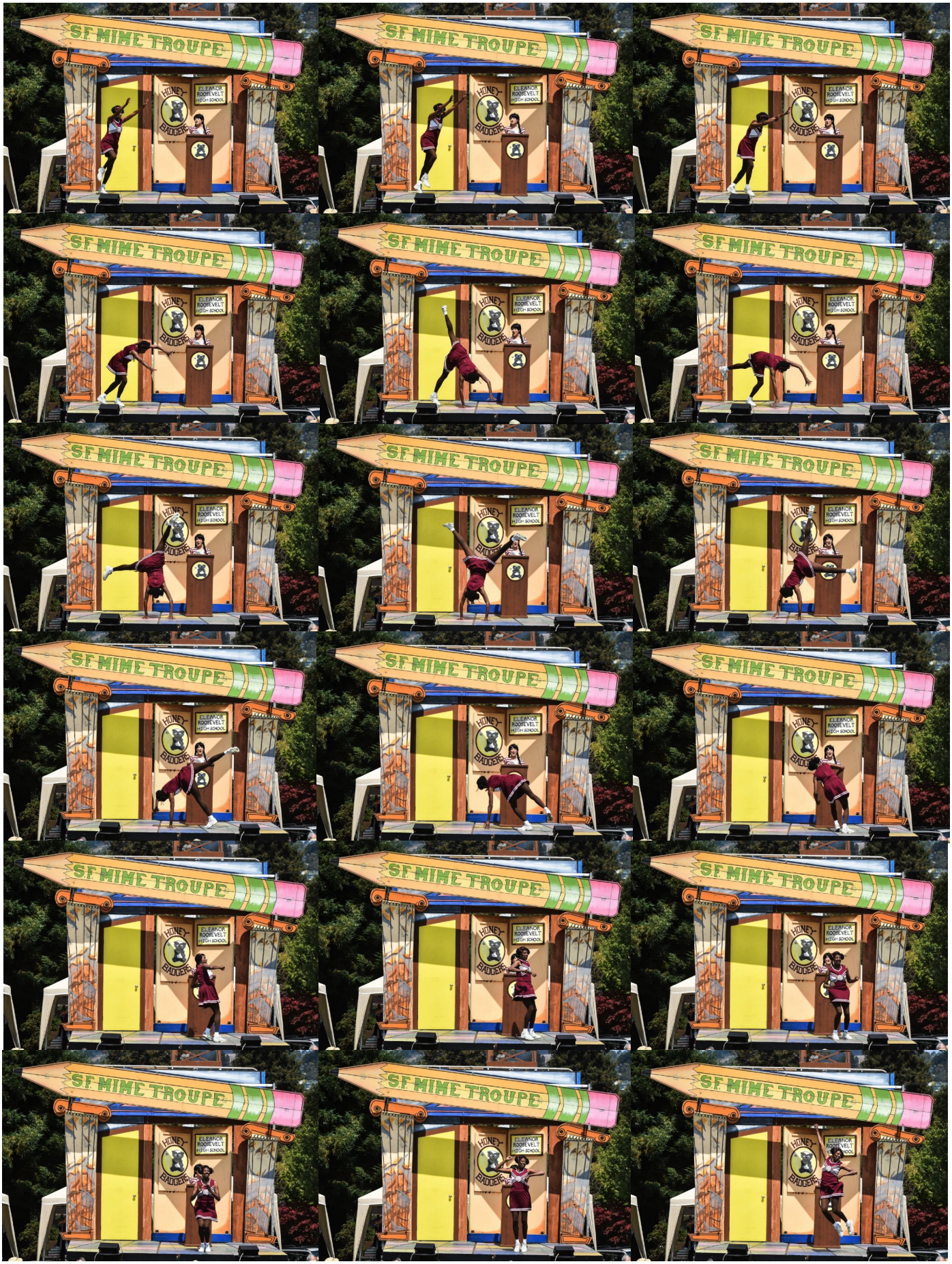
parasites, keep out! Next: fourth period dance class has been cancelled until further notice. I know! But it's on the first floor, right below the library, below the bathroom, so eewww! But there is some good news -

A chipper cheerleader, ESTELLE, enters.

MICHIKO (CONT'D)
Congratulations to the girls basketball team for making the quarter-finals! Yay! Next we take on the Fighting Lemurs of Jefferson High, Soooo-

ESTELLE performs a cartwheel across the stage.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as MICHIKO Photo by Mike Melnyk



Velina Brown as ESTELLE, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MICHIKO Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

MICHIKO and ESTELLE
Gooo Honey Badgers! Yea!

MICHIKO
Unfortunately because of the water dripping from the bathroom, library, and dance studio. The floor of the Gymnasium is warped. So all the quarter finals games will be played at Jefferson. But still - Yay!

ESTELLE exits.

MICHIKO (CONT'D)
And now it is my pleasure to introduce to you, parents, teachers, and students, our special guest, the president of our school board, Mr. Arthur Quisdedo!

A very well-dressed, middle-aged Black man enters - ARTHUR QUISDEDO. Waving like a politician he goes to the podium.

QUISDEDO
Thank you, Michiko, and thank you parents, students, and teachers -

As MICHIKO opens the door to exit an older teacher, ETHEL OROCURU, slowly enters and walks across the room. QUISDEDO stops for the interruption as ETHEL takes a seat, begins grading papers. ETHEL seems the stereotypical bitter old teacher. MICHIKO exits.

QUISDEDO (CONT'D)
- of Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Thank you for inviting me to speak at your assembly. As I look out at all your eager faces -

ETHEL
(snapping at QUISDEDO)
We didn't invite you.

QUISDEDO
What?

ETHEL
We didn't invite you. Your office insisted.

Pause.

QUISDEDO
(to audience)
So... as I look out at all your eager faces -

ETHEL
I know I am.

QUISDEDO
You are what?

ETHEL
Eager! To get these students back to class! Some of us need all the education time we can get. (pointing in audience) I'm looking at you, Billy Turner!

QUISDEDO
(to audience)
As I look out at -

ETHEL
(to boy in audience)
Two pages! The Bill of Rights! On my desk.

QUISDEDO
(to audience)
As I look out at all your eager -

ETHEL
(to boy in audience)
Three o'clock!

QUISDEDO
I'm sorry, I don't think we've been introduced. I'm Arthur Quisdedo, and you are?

Suddenly LAVINIA JONES, a well-dressed Black woman, enters. She is very angry.

LAVINIA
(to ETHEL)
Miss Orocuru!

ETHEL
Mrs. Jones!

LAVINIA slams the door.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
If this is about your son's grade -

QUISDEDO
(to audience)
As I look out at all your eager -

LAVINIA
How does he keep ending up in your class? I'm very sorry President Quisdedo, I don't mean to interrupt you,
(to ETHEL)
But it was a "B" Social studies, then a "B" minus in algebra, a "C" in P.E. -

QUISDEDO
P.E.?

ETHEL
I coach basketball.

MICHIKO pops on stage.

MICHIKO
Goooo, Honey Badgers!

MICHIKO exits.

ETHEL
If your son would focus on his assignments rather than his video games -

LAVINIA
And now a "C" minus in American Government?

ETHEL
Thomas has no idea how the government works!

LAVINIA
School is supposed to prepare my son for the real world, not teach him all this government whatever!

ETHEL
We're preparing him to be a citizen!

LAVINIA
Being a citizen isn't a job! I swear, if I were President of the School Board-

QUISDEDO
WELL YOU'RE NOT! I am. I won that election. You lost.

LAVINA is crushed, as she is each time anyone mentions her electoral loss.

LAVINIA
I know...

Pause.

QUISDEDO
(to audience)
As I look out at all your eager faces -

QUISDEDO quickly gestures to cut off the two women from interrupting him.

QUISDEDO (CONT'D)
I know we all have the same questions: how can we save our schools? How can we save our students? How will they know which bathroom to use? I look around at this once proud school and see it crumbling. But I say we cannot let that happen! We cannot fail our children! That's why I have come up with a plan to bring badly needed technology, innovation, and most importantly efficiency to schools like Eleanor Roosevelt High!

ETHEL
He's been in office seven years and he finally has a plan?

LAVINIA
If I were president this school wouldn't have been crumbling in the first place.

QUISDEDO cuts them off again.

QUISDEDO
(to LAVINIA)
Parents, (to ETHEL) Teachers, (to audience) and... students, I give you our new partner in restoring our schools: The Learning Academy for Virtual Achievement!

ETHEL AND LAVINA
LAVA?

QUISDEDO
To further explain it is my pleasure to introduce the CEO of LAVA Corp., Mr. Fredersen J. Babbit.

FREDERSEN J. BABBIT, a nerdy, bespectacled technocrat with the boxy suit and shock of reddish hair enters and comes to the podium.

BABBIT
Thank you, President Quisdedo, and Eleanor Roosevelt High School. At LAVA Corp. We believe in children. We believe in learning. We believe in America. And we believe in Children Learning America!

QUISDEDO
As a pilot program, and for the same money the district wasted on old-fashioned learning, LAVA Corp. has agreed to supply Roosevelt with state-of-the-art technology to help our kids be the best they can.

Pause.

BABBIT
(driven to correct and finish the previous sentence.)
Be. Efficiency! That's what LAVA is all about! And with LAVA in every classroom, in every computer, with LAVA in the mind of every child we can make American Schools Great! Again!

LAVINIA
Now that's what I'm talking about! Give these kids some real world skill, not all this whatever. Now if I'd been president of the school board –

QUISDEDO
Starting this week, Mr. Babbit will be visiting classes, charting efficiency, helping both the student and teachers find the most profitable use of their time. So thank you all for welcoming him into your school. And now -

School bell rings.

QUISDEDO (CONT'D)
Get to class!

Exeunt.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as BABBIT, Rotimi Agbabiaka as QUISDEDO
Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

SCENE 2

THE CLASSROOM OF ETHEL OROCURU.

ETHEL enters, clearly upset.

ETHEL
Efficiency! Technology!
(holding a book)
If it weren't for Prop 13 back in 1978 we'd still have the best public schools in the country! Instead underpaid teachers have to spend our own money on school supplies in districts we can't afford to live in anymore! People don't remember how we got ourselves into this situation. That's what happens when people don't know what it means to be a citizen. It means we take care of each other.

ESTELLE enters with more books.

ESTELLE
Ms. Orocuru, here's more. The Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, the Emancipation Proclamation -

ETHEL
Thank you, Estelle. Just put them on the table.

ESTELLE
Sure are a lot of books for one class. Isn't there an app for this?

ESTELLE pulls out her phone, starts texting.

ETHEL
There is no app for citizenship!

ESTELLE
(absently)
What?

ETHEL
Never mind!

ESTELLE
My dad says voting is for suckers...

ETHEL
People marched and fought and died so that we could vote!

ESTELLE
My dad says government should be run like a business...

ETHEL
Government is not a for-profit enterprise! Our elected officials administer services for the citizens with our taxes -

ESTELLE
Well, my dad says taxes are a waste of money...

ETHEL
Without taxes we wouldn't have roads, fire fighters, libraries, schools -

ESTELLE
My dad says -

ETHEL
YOUR DAD IS AN IDIOT!

ETHEL tries to clam herself collects self.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
Estelle... government is not about profit. It's about us. But only if we do our jobs as citizens.

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as ETHEL, Velina Brown as ESTELLE Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

Song: OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

OUR AMERICAN DREAM!

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO JUST ONE THING

TELL ME!

ETHEL points to ESTELLE for the answer.

ESTELLE
(confused)

THE PRESIDENT?

ETHEL

HARDLY!

ESTELLE

CONGRESS?

ETHEL

WHAT A JOKE!

ESTELLE

THE MAYOR? THE GOV'NER?

ETHEL

WHO'S OUR ONLY HOPE?

TELL ME, TELL ME!

ESTELLE doesn't care, and bored with the conversation has pulled out her phone again.

ETHEL *(cont'd)*

OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

OUR AMERICAN DREAM.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE

TO MAKE IT ALL COME TRUE?

IT'S YOU, YES YOU, YES YOU YES YOU AND

ONLY YOU!

ETHEL is now chasing a confused and terrified ESTELLE around the classroom.

ETHEL *(cont'd)*

IT'S YOUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT -

DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY!

EYES HALF-CLOSED FROM THOSE VIDEOS

AND THOSE GAMES YOU PLAY.

DEMOCRACY IS PRECIOUS

SO OPEN UP THOSE EYES!

ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE,

FREEDOM IS THE PRIZE!

ETHEL snatches ESTELLE phone, replaces it with a book.

ETHEL *(cont'd)*

The Federalist Papers!

ESTELLE

Hey!

ETHEL

HAMILTON, MADISON, JAY!

STANDING UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN –

ESTELLE gets her phone back

ETHEL *(cont'd)*

THESE WRITINGS PAVED THE WAY -

FOR... ??? PLEASE???

ETHEL grabs phone again, replaces it with another book.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

THE CONSTITUTION!

ESTELLE

Stop that!

ETHEL

THAT ROCK ON WHICH WE STAND!

C'MON ESTELLE, YOU SHOULD KNOW

IT'S RIGHT THERE IN YOUR HAND!

AND TELL ME WHAT CAME NEXT?

ESTELLE
(desperately guessing)
The Bill of Rights?

ETHEL

HOLDING ONTO FREEDOM

IS AN ENDLESS FIGHT!

THOMAS JONES enters. He is a typical nerdy Black high-school student, and over his eyes is a virtual reality headset. He is mid-game, stalking and fighting the unseen enemies with his unseen sword. THOMAS acts out his battle.

THOMAS
Enderman... Enderman... Gotcha! I gotcha.! Yes yes yes! No! Don't teleport. Ahh!

THOMAS is inadvertently chasing ETHEL and ESTELLE around the stage. Finally, with a big slash of his "sword" THOMAS vanquishes his foe, and picks up his "prize."

Pearl. Yes!

ETHEL
Thomas!

OROCURU removes THOMAS' headset.

THOMAS
Oh, hi, Ms. Orocuru.
(sees ESTELLE, trying to impress her)
Hi, Estelle. See, you get pearls, then go to the Nether, then you defeat blazes, get blaze rods, turn them into powder, then you craft the Eye of Ender. Eyes of ender let you open up the end! If you can find the portal.

ESTELLE
(looking at THOMAS in the embarrassed way cool kids look at nerds)
O...kay... Uh...I gotta go to Bio now. (as a cheer) Go mitochondria! Bye, Ms. Orocuru!

THOMAS
Bye, Estelle!

ESTELLE
(dismissive)
No.

ESTELLE exits.

ETHEL
So Thomas. Are you here to play make believe or talk about your C?

THOMAS
My essay on the Electoral College was epic!: "It doesn't represent the people..."

THOMAS & ETHEL
"So it should be abolished, right?"

ETHEL
Pasting from Wikipedia doesn't count! Read this: Federalist Number 68. Alexander Hamilton on the ideal voter -

OROCURU hands THOMAS a massive book.

ETHEL (CONT'D)
And this: Federalist Number 39. James Madison on citizen rights.

OROCURU hands THOMAS another massive book. THOMAS staggers under the weight

THOMAS
Can't you just give me a B?

BABBIT abruptly enters. ETHEL and THOMAS look at him.

BABBIT
Carry on.

THOMAS
Ms. Orocuru. I don't have time to read! I gotta find farmland to plant seeds for a pumpkin to put on my head before I battle the Endermen. I need protection!

ETHEL
You need to do more research!

THOMAS groan. BABBIT holds up a tablet computer.

BABBIT
You need... a text tablet! LAVA'S action-packed online learning.

THOMAS, seeing it, hands all his books back to ETHEL, and mesmerized takes the tablet from BABBIT

THOMAS
Whoa...

BABBIT
Never read a boring book again.

THOMAS puts his VR headset on again, begins using the tablet.

ETHEL
That's a toy!

BABBIT
Look at him. Look what virtual learning can do.

ETHEL
He's just playing a game!

BABBIT
There are no games on the text tablet!

THOMAS is clearly playing a game. Suddenly he reacts to something in the game.

THOMAS
Creepers!

The text tablet starts to make strange, glitchy sounds.

THOMAS *(cont'd)*
Hey! What's wrong with this thing? It's frozen.

THOMAS hands tablet to BABBIT.

BABBIT
You broke it with all your spamming!

THOMAS
(angry)
I never spam. Your system sucks!

BABBIT
It does not suck!

THOMAS
Does too!

BABBIT
Does not!

THOMAS
Does too!

BABBIT
Does not!

THOMAS
Does too! Does too! Does too!

BABBIT is furious. He snatches off his glasses, his voice changes to a much harsher tone, and seems about to attack THOMAS.

BABBIT

You... you... you...

BABBIT clams himself down, and puts his glasses back on.

BABBIT (CONT'D)

Principal's office!

THOMAS looks to ETHEL for support, but there is nothing ETHEL can do. THOMAS storms out. ETHEL and BABBIT rotate off.

SCENE 3

IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE.

THOMAS enters, chagrined, and waits for the Principal. After a moment of boredom he sits on the Principal's desk, pulls out his phone, and starts to play a game. Unnoticed by him his mother, LAVINIA enters.THOMAS hears. LAVINA closes the door.

THOMAS

Mom!

THOMAS tries to hide phone.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

LAVINIA

I wanted to have a word with a couple of your teachers.

THOMAS

You've got to stop hassling anyone who doesn't give me an "A".

LAVINIA

Hassling? Hassling!

THOMAS

Mom -

LAVINIA

Was it hassling when I stopped that teacher from flunking you because she thought a black kid couldn't know all her vocabulary words? Turpitude!

THOMAS snaps to attention, barks answers.

THOMAS

Vile! Shameful!

LAVINIA

Ossify!

THOMAS

Rigid! Inflexible!

LAVINIA

Incognizant!

THOMAS

Ignorant! Uninformed!

LAVINA nods her approval, and THOMAS relaxes.

LAVINIA
And was it "hassling" when I got that teacher to be your geometry tutor?

THOMAS snaps to attention, barks answers.

THOMAS
"The square of the hypotenuse of a a right triangle is equal to the sum of the square of the remaining sides!"

LAVINIA nods again, and THOMAS relaxes again.

LAVINIA
And was it "hassling" when I told every teacher to grade you harder than every other student?

THOMAS snaps to attention.

THOMAS
(confused)
Wait, what?

LAVINIA
I will not let them treat my son like he's stupid!

THOMAS
You know what the other kids call me, Mom? "Son of whoop ass!"

LAVINIA
To be considered half as smart Black kids still have to be twice as smart... which means to be considered equally smart you have to be four times as smart... and to prove you're 3.9 as smart you have to be -

THOMAS snaps to attention.

THOMAS
15.6 times as smart! (relaxes) But Mom... what if I'm just not that smart?

LAVINIA is literally staggered.

LAVINIA
Hush!

THOMAS
What if I'm just... average?

LAVINIA
Colleges don't look for average.

THOMAS
What if I don't want to go to college?

LAVINIA is literally staggered again.

LAVINIA

HUSH!

THOMAS

Dad didn't go to college.

LAVINIA

Your father is not a man to emulate! A plumber! That's all he wants to be! I love my husband, but he spends all day snaking out other people's toilets. He doesn't understand - in this country you live at the top, or at the bottom; everyone else is climbing up or getting flushed down.

THOMAS

When I was little I wanted to be just like him.

LAVINIA is literally, horribly staggered.

LAVINIA

HUSH! HUSH!

THOMAS

But not anymore.

Velina Brown as LAVINIA, Rotimi Agbabiaka as THOMAS Photo by Michael Melnyk

LAVINIA

Ohthankgod!

THOMAS

I want to be something better -

LAVINIA

Yes!

THOMAS

To start my own business -

LAVINIA

Yes!

THOMAS

I going to be...

LAVINIA

Yes?

THOMAS

A professional YouTuber!

LAVINIA is literally, horribly, terribly staggered.

LAVINIA

Huuuuuuuuuush!

THOMAS

I have 11,362 subscribers!

LAVINIA

No one is paying to watch a Black kid play Winecraft!

THOMAS

It's Minecraft!

LAVINIA

Whatever! It certainly isn't a-real-jobcraft!

THOMAS

You're always telling me to think for myself, to do my own thing -

LAVINIA

And when the time is right I'll tell you what that thing is. You have to be pragmatic -

THOMAS

But -

LAVINIA

HUSH! You can't just be what you want, get what you want... you have to figure out what's best for you to get, then fight to get it. And you better figure it out soon.

Song: "THE WORLD OUT THERE".

LAVINIA *(cont')*

DON'T YOU THINK

YOU BETTER GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER?

AIN'T MUCH TIME

'TWEEN NOW AND NEVER.

ALL THE DREAMS YOU TALK ABOUT

THEY'RE JUST ABOUT AS REAL

AS THE GAMES YOU PLAY.

ALL THE LITTLE GREEN MEN YOU KILL

THEY WILL NOT HELP YOU

WHEN THERE'S BILLS TO PAY!

THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE,

AND IT' NOTHING LIKE YOU PICTURE.

IT'S GOT NO PATIENCE

FOR PLAYSTATIONS

ONE DAY IT'S GONNA HIT YOU!

THAT WORLD OUT THERE

WILL DO ITS BEST TO TAKE YOU DOWN.

UNLESS YOU PULL YOURSELF UP,

PULL YOURSELF UP

'TIL YOU STAND ON HIGHER GROUND.

THOMAS

DON'T YOU THINK

I COULD BE ONTO SOMETHING?

YOU LOOK AT ME

ALL YOU SEE... IS NOTHING!

LAVINIA

YOUR FATHER HAS TO WORK SO HARD--

THOMAS

I'M NOT MY FATHER! I'M NOT YOU!

WHY CAN'T YOU SEE?

LAVINIA

I REFUSE TO LET YOU MAKE--

LAVINIA AND THOMAS

--THE SAME MISTAKES HE MADE?

THOMAS

THAT'S UP TO ME!

LAVINIA AND THOMAS

THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE

AND YOU DON'T EVEN SEE IT -

LAVINIA

I'VE SEEN TOO MANY PEOPLE FALL,

CHASING FOOLISH DREAMS

THOMAS

SO BE IT!

LAVINIA AND THOMAS

THAT WORLD OUT THERE

DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S CHANGING FAST?

LAVINIA

I'M LOOKING OUT FOR YOU AND YOUR FUTURE

THOMAS

WHILE YOU'RE STUCK IN THE PAST!

BABBIT abruptly enters. He notices LAVINIA.

BABBIT

And you are...?

LAVINIA

(extending her hand)

Lavinia Jones. I'm Thomas' mother.

BABBIT doesn't take LAVINA's hand.

BABBIT

Well, Miss Jones -

LAVINA withdraws her hand, offended.

LAVINIA

Missus.

BABBIT

Mrs. Jones -

LAVINIA

Why would you assume I wasn't married?

BABBIT

Because, well you're, because, you're, well...

BABBIT trying hard not to say "because you're Black,

LAVINIA

Where is the principal? I want to talk to him.

BABBIT checks his text tablet.

BABBIT
Mrs. Jones....Ooooh, that's right - you're that mother that's has so much to say about how schools should be run -

LAVINIA
I guess so.

BABBIT
The woman that Quisdedo defeated in the last election.

LAVINA is crushed, again. BABBIT sits behind the Principal's desk.

LAVINIA
(trying to cover pain)
Mr. Babbit... I appreciate that you are trying to make this school more organized, more productive -

BABBIT
Efficient.

LAVINIA
And I support that. I've always thought schools should be more businesslike. However -

THOMAS
Mom, he's the one that sent me to the principal's office!

LAVINIA
What?

BABBIT
Your son yelled at me in class.

LAVINIA
(to THOMAS)
Thomas?

BABBIT
I was trying to show him some of LAVA Corp.'s New technology -

THOMAS
Their tech is crap!

BABBIT
Our tech is not crap! You were spamming the button!

THOMAS
Was not!

BABBIT

Were too!

In anger BABBIT pulls off glasses again, then regains control of himself.

LAVINIA
Mr. Babbit, I'm sure Thomas didn't mean to -

BABBIT
What he meant doesn't matter. It is what he did that counts. Bad behavior, like low grades, threatens this school's funding. But don't worry; your son appears smart enough.

LAVINIA
(offended)
Appears?

BABBIT
This meeting is over.

LAVINIA
Maybe I should have a meeting with President Quisdedo.

BABBIT
Be my guest. But remind me - By how many votes did you lose that election?

LAVINA is crushed, again.

BABBIT (CONT'D)
Thomas, I don't want to see you in here again!

THOMAS
I don't want to be here now!

BABBIT
Thank you for your input, Mrs. Jones.

LAVINIA
Come on, Thomas. You have to get back to class.

THOMAS and LAVINIA exit, leaving BABBIT smugly, nerdishly triumphant.

SCENE 4

THE OFFICES OF FREDERSEN J. BABBIT, LAVA CORP.

A lavish office, with a large LAVA Corp logo on one wall, and a large painting of BABBIT on another. The phone is ringing. A woman, TATIANNA, enters. She is a sexy, slinky Russian, and speaks with a heavy accent. TATIANNA nonchalantly answers the phone, starts doing her nails.

TATIANNA
LAVA Corp., Mr Babbit's office. I'm sorry, Mr. Babbit not right now in office, I can to take message? Superintendent of schools? Which district?

TATIANNA enters information on text tablet.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
I tell him you called. Thank you.

TATIANNA hangs up phone, which immediately rings again.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
Mr. Babbit's office. Which district?

TATIANNA enters information on text tablet.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
I tell him you called! Thank you!

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as TATIANNA
Photo by Mike Melnyk

TATIANNA hangs up again, and phone rings again. She is getting annoyed with the interruptions.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
Yes? Yes, Mr. Babbit's book is available on the Amazon. "School is a four-letter word." I know is six letters. Is ironic!

TATIANNA hangs up, phone rings, but she ignores it and leaves office exhausted. Voice mail answers:

VOICE MAIL
"You've reached the office of Fredersen Babbit, Chief Executive Officer of LAVA Corporation. Please leave a message after the -

Sound of beep.

VOICE ON PHONE
Mr. Babbit, this is John King, Jr., United States Secretary of Education, and I would very much like to speak to you about -

TATIANNA suddenly races back into the room and picked up the phone. She is furiously texting.

TATIANNA
Secretary Mr. King, Jr.! Thank you so much for calling! Mr. Babbit is not at his desk right now, but I am sure he will be back shortly. If you just hold a moment... No, NO! You hold! It is much more... efficient! That you hold now! And that is what we are about! Efficient!

BABBIT enters at a run, on his text tablet..

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
Ah, here he is now!

BABBIT puts away his text tablet, and takes desk phone from TATIANNA.

BABBIT
Secretary King, Fredersen J. Babbit here. Oh, not at all. I always have time to people as dedicated to education as I. Am. Oh, you read my book! Well, thank you very much. Yes, it is ironic.. Yes, I agree - our parents vision of equal public education for all is dying on the vine, and only the efficiency of private enterprise can save it! Why, yes! LAVA Corp. would love to go national! We're honored. Let us set up a face to face - I'll have my people call your people. Good-bye.

BABBIT (CONT'D)
(solemnly)
The future of American education is in our hands...

After a moment BABBIT and TATIANNA burst into laughter, as BABBIT takes off his glasses, revealing the real, much more vulgar, brutal version of himself. Babbit now speaks with a

Brooklyn accent. Let's face it - he seems like Donald Trump. And suddenly the boxy suit and shock of reddish hair make sense.

TATIANNA
I cannot believe you are getting away with this!

BABBIT
I know, right?

TATIANNA
What was that you said - "Public education is dying on the vine-"

BABBIT
"And only the efficiency of private enterprise -"

TATIANNA AND BABBIT
"Can save it!"

Both laugh harder.

BABBIT
They are eating this crap up! It's like if a rich guy in a sharp suit says "efficiency" they give us whatever we want!

BABBIT give TATIANNA the phone, who hangs it up..

TATIANNA
All this from a man who has been bankrupt four times!

Awkward pause. Then -

BABBIT
Exactly! If it weren't for government privatization, Wall Street would have died years ago. 'Cuz why actually make things when you can get rich on tax dollars? But defense is already private. Department of Energy is owned by the oil companies. So what does that leave, my little radish?

TATIANNA
What?

BABBIT
EDJAMACATION!

BABBIT snatches the glasses of the portrait of himself on the wall.

BABBIT
70 billion in discretionary funding, new mandatory funding - 145 billion. So we convince the government schools are not efficient and...

TATIANNA
And?

BABBIT

Say bingo.

TATIANNA

Bingo.

BABBIT

Say it louder!

TATIANNA

BINGO!

BABBIT

BINGO! Billions of dollars for charter schools, remote schools, professional workshops for home schools - billions of dollars...

Lisa Hori-Garcia as BABBIT
Photo by Fletcher Oakes

TATIANNA
For selling them what they already had!

BABBIT
And the best part is - if one of our schools fails the parents and press don't point the finger at us, they blame... the government!

TATIANNA
Oh, Fredersen... how do you fit all that brain in that tiny head?

TATIANNA hugs him.

BABBIT
Hey! Don't mess up the hair!

Song: "EFFICIENCY"

BABBIT *(cont'd)*

THIS IS ONLY PHASE ONE OF MY BEAUTIFUL PLAN.

UNDERSTAND?

TATIANNA
Tell me more!

BABBIT

STEP BY STEP, CAREFUL NOT TO TIP MY HAND.

UNDERSTAND?

TATIANNA
I'm not sure yet...

BABBIT

IF YOU SAY IT LOUD ENOUGH

AGAIN AND AGAIN, PEOPLE LISTEN!

TATIANNA
I'm listening, darling

BABBIT

WHEN YOU'RE BACKED BY THE BIG BANKS

AND THE THINK TANKS

PEOPLE LISTEN.

WE SAY CUT TAXES! THEY SAY -

TATIANNA

CUT TAXES!

BABBIT

THEY LISTENED!

AND NOW--BIG SURPRISE--

THERE'S NOTHING IN THEIR COFFERS.

THE SCHOOLS NEED SAVING

AND THEY'RE FIELDING OFFERS!

IT'S MAGICAL, IT'S MAGICAL, MY LOVE!

THAT 10-LETTER WORD, OUR GIFT FROM ABOVE.

SAY ANYTHING, IT'S ALL HOW YOUR PHRASE IT

THEY FALL AT MY FEET EACH TIME I PRAISE IT -

TATIANNA

I think I know!

TATIANNA AND BABBIT

EFFICIENCY, EFFICIENCY

THAT WELL-OILD MACHINE –

EVERYTHING IN SYNC AND NOTHING LOST.

EFFICIENCY, EFFICIENCY

IT'S LEAN AND IT'S MEAN –

UTILITY PROPORTIONATE TO COST!

EFFICIENCY, EFFICIENCY

NOTHING EVER WASTED –

BABBIT

MY DREAM!

TATIANNA

YOUR DREAM!

BABBIT

SO CLOSE I CAN TASTE IT!

EVERYTHING THESE KIDS NEED TO KNOW,

EVERY NAME, EVERY FACT, EVERY DATE,

NOW IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE –

BABBIT holds up text tablet

I'M LICKING MY CHOPS,

'CAUSE THIS FLAT LITTLE BOX

IS THE NEW FORT KNOX

IT'S CLEAR!

SOON I'LL CONTROL THE HEART AND THE SOUL

OF EVERY THOUGHT THAT SHAPES

THEIR LITTLE MINDS...

WHAT THEY LIKE, WHAT THEY LOVE,

WHAT THEY'RE IGNORANT OF

THEIR EVERY VALUE

LAVA CORP DEFINES!!!

BABBIT (CONT'D)

And once LAVA is in all the schools my little carrot, I move on to Phase Two of my plan!

TATIANNA

You have a Phase Two?

BABBIT

Do I have a Phase Two? Let me tell you about Phase Two...

Music starts again as BABBIT winds up to launch into singing about Phase Two, when there is a knock on the door.

QUISDEDO

(from outside)

Mr. Babbit!

BABBIT AND TATIANNA

Quisdedo!

BABBIT

Hold on...

BABBIT puts glasses back on himself and his portrait.

BABBIT *(cont'd)*

Let him in.

BABBIT resumes his nerdy persona as TATIANNA opens the door, and QUISDEDO enters.

BABBIT *(cont'd)*

Arthur!

QUISDEDO

Fredersen!

QUISDEDO (CONT'D)

I hope this isn't a bad time.

BABBIT

Not at all, not at all. Tatianna, please set up that meeting with the Secretary of Education.

TATIANNA exits.

QUISDEDO

(impressed)

The Secretary of Education...

BABBIT

So, what can I do for you?

QUISDEDO

I just wanted to congratulate you on your success at Eleanor Roosevelt. From your reports it sounds like you've really turned that school around.

BABBIT

Efficiency, Arthur, it's not about me. It's all about efficiency.

QUISDEDO

And that's why the Board has authorized me to move ahead with my... Phase Two!

TATIANNA pops her head in.

BABBIT AND TATIANNA

You have a Phase Two too?

TATIANNA

Sorry.

TATIANNA exits.

BABBIT
What is this Phase Two of which you speak?

QUISDEDO
I want LAVA to spread to every campus in the district!

TATIANNA
(offstage, shouted)
Ura!

TATIANNA pokes her head in.

TATIANNA *(cont'd)*
Sorry.

TATIANNA exits.

BABBIT
Thank you, Arthur. I appreciate your trust.

QUISDEDO
You've earned it. Well, I better get back to the office and draw up the contracts.

TATIANNA opens the door.

QUISDEDO *(cont'd)*
Ms. Tatianna...

TATIANNA
(flirtatiously)
Dasvidanya...

QUISDEDO exits, TATIANNA closes door.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
What happened?

BABBIT resumes his Trumpesque self.

BABBIT
I said efficiency two times and he gave me the whole district!

TATIANNA
Nostrovia!

BABBIT
And now, my little rutabaga, let me tell you about my Phase Two... Once I am in control of the whole school district we're going to -

Music swells for a song again, but before BABBIT can start there's a knock on the door, which opens. It's QUISDEDO again.

QUISDEDO
Oh, I forgot to mention -

BABBIT AND TATIANNA
(innocently)
Yes?

QUISDEDO
There's a special assembly at Roosevelt tomorrow. You really should be there.

BABBIT
I will be!

TATIANNA closes door.

BABBIT *(cont'd)*
Once the district is mine (starting to sing) I'm gonna -

Knock on door.

BABBIT *(cont'd)*
What!

QUISDEDO pops head in.

QUISDEDO
I just wanted to let you know -

TATIANNA closes door. Music swells, BABBIT gets ready and - the door opens again. QUISDEDO pops head in.

TATIANNA
We're closed for lunch!

TATIANNA slams door.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
Quick! What is plan!

BABBIT
(singing)

RE-EDJAMACATION!

TATIANNA
(singing)

RE-EDJAMACATION!
You mean like education?

BABBIT
Yeah, only I said "re" at the beginning. Aren't you listening? Once all the schools are filled with my LAVA - virtual texts, virtual lessons, virtual teachers I can re-edjumacate any way I want!

TATIANNA
You could put things in their lessons...

BABBIT
Or take things out!

TATIANNA
History?

BABBIT
Chapter One: "Any union or strike that has ever gotten in the way of people like me making money was bad for America!"

TATIANNA
Economics?

BABBIT
Chapter Two: "Whatever makes people like me money is good for America."

TATIANNA
American government?

BABBIT
Chapter Three: "Power should be left to powerful people. Like me. And anybody who tells anybody how this county is really run, is a traitor."

TATIANNA begins to seductively move towards BABBIT.

TATIANNA
Oh, Fredersen! When you first found me on that website -

BABBIT
SiberianBabesWantAmericanHusband.com -

TATIANNA
You never said you were so brilliant!

BABBIT
Say it again.

TATIANNA
Brilliant?

BABBIT
Say it louder!

TATIANNA
Brilliant!

BABBIT
BRILLIANT! These suckers already believe almost everything corporations tell 'em. So it won't take much to get their kids to swallow my crap in a classroom!

TATIANNA
But your Phase Two... can it work?

BABBIT takes TATIANNA in his arms,.

BABBIT
One word, my little parsnip: E-fficiency.

TATIANNA and BABBIT are in a compromising position, gearing up to start singing again, as the door opens again, and QUISDEDO pops his head in.

QUISDEDO
There really is one thing I should tell you -

QUISDEDO sees TATIANNA and BABBIT in an awkward position.

QUISDEDO *(cont'd)*
It can wait.

QUISDEDO exits shutting door.

TATIANNA AND BABBIT

EFFICIENCY, EFFICIENCY –

DOING MORE WITH LESS,

BABBIT

GETTING WHAT I WANT FOR VERY LITTLE.

EFFICIENCY, EFFICIENCY,

THAT WORD THAT MEANS SO MUCH TO ME,

NOTICE IT HAS "ICIE" IN THE MIDDLE?

YES, IT'S COLD AND SEVERE

AND IT REALLY DOESN'T CARE,

FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT THE BOTTOM LINE –

EFFICIENCY! GIVE ME EFFICIENCY!

IT'S SO EFFICIENT THAT IT WORKS EVERY TIME!

Exeunt

SCENE 5

ETHEL'S CLASSROOM.

A bell rings. ESTELLE bounds into place.

ESTELLE
(reading from a text tablet)
"The Legislative Branch of the United States Government consists of two deliberative assemblies - the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Senate ratifies treaties and approves presidential appointments while the House initiates revenue-raising bills. Both must vote on and approve laws, and only Congress can declare war."

ETHEL
Thank you, Estelle.

ESTELLE
(as an enthusiastic cheer)
TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT THAT IS HOW WE LEGISLATE!

ETHEL
Thank you!

ESTELLE
Go, legislative branch! Woooo!

ETHEL
Now, our last presentation on the three branches of government -

BABBIT enters through the door, gestures the class to continue.

ETHEL *(cont'd)*
Thomas Jones... the Executive Branch, please.

THOMAS
(reading from tablet)
"The Executive Branch of the United States government is headed by an elected President, and executes the laws enacted by the Legislative Branch.

ESTELLE
Yes!

THOMAS grins and looks at ESTELLE, who dryly looks back at him.

ESTELLE *(cont'd)*
No.

THOMAS
The Executive Branch can also initiate diplomatic relationships as well as limited military actions - but these must both be approved by the Legislative Branch.

BABBIT
But what about Executive Orders?

ETHEL
Mr. Babbit -

BABBIT
What database are you using?

THOMAS
The school database.

BABBIT
No, no, no! You should be accessing the new LAVA Corp. database!

BABBIT type's something onto his text tablet, and sends it to the database. After a moment it's arrival on THOMAS' tablet is announced with a "ding."

THOMAS
(reading)
"The President can use Executive Orders whenever he feels swift action is in the best interest of the country."

ETHEL
Mr. Babbit, please -

THOMAS
Is that true, Miss Orocuru?

ETHEL
Well, yes, but -

BABBIT
The President has to be able to create the tools needed to reconfigure the nation, block by block...

THOMAS
Sounds like Minecraft!

BABBIT types on his tablet again. THOMAS' tablet "dings."

THOMAS *(cont'd)*
(reads his tablet)
"The President executes the laws enacted by the Legislative Branch."

ESTELLE
Yay!

THOMAS
"But is not totally constrained by them -"

ETHEL
What? Let me see that!

ETHEL grabs tablet.

ETHEL *(cont'd)*
"The Executive Branch can also initiate diplomatic relationships as well as military actions." Where's the rest?

BABBIT
What rest?

ETHEL
"- but these must both be approved by the Legislative Branch!"

BABBIT
Must they?

ETHEL
What have you done?

BABBIT
As you know LAVA Corp. creates all the texts assigned to this school -

ETHEL
Who do you think you are - changing what these student learn?

BABBIT writes on his tablet. THOMAS' tablet dings.

THOMAS
(reading his tablet)
"Who do I have to be?"

ESTELLE
Ooooh

THOMAS
Rekt!

ETHEL
No, no, no. What do you think I teach here? Just names and dates?

THOMAS & ESTELLE
Yes.

ETHEL
(to THOMAS and ESTELLE)
I'm teaching you how to be citizens!

Reprise: "OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT"

OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

AN EXPERIMENT TO SEE

IF THE PEOPLE CAN BE WISE ENOUGH

AND STEER THEIR DESTINY!

THE COURSE IS FRAUGHT WITH PERIL,

FREEDOM MAKES DEMANDS,

KNOW YOUR STORY! KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

TOMORROW'S IN YOUR HANDS!

BABBIT
Is her class always this boring?

THOMAS and ESTELLE
Yes.

BABBIT
Well, then! I think you'll find lessons on your text tablets much more interesting.

BABBIT writes on his tablet. THOMAS' and ESTELLE's tablets ding.

THOMAS
(reading tablet)
"The President is like the Enderdragon."

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as ETHEL, Rotimi Agbabiaka as THOMAS,
Velina Brown as ESTELLE Photo by Mike Melnyk

ETHEL
Ender Dragon?

ThOMAS
I want to do my report again! Only this time with diamond swords!

ESTELLE
Diamond swords! I want to do mine again too!

THOMAS and ESTELLE begin feverishly typing and clearly playing on their text tablets.

BABBIT
And now they are excited about learning!

ETHEL
Get out of my classroom!

BABBIT
Actually... maybe it's time for you to go.

ETHEL
What?

BABBIT
The corporation is authorized to make staff changes however we feel is most efficient. I understand you're good at one thing: Basketball...

ETHEL
(sadly)
Goooo, Honey Badgers...

BABBIT
I suggest you stick to that.

ETHEL
You can't take teaching away from me!

BABBIT
It's not me, it's about what's best for these students, and it's just not efficient to keep teachers that are so analog.

BABBIT types something on her tablet, and the door opens, revealing a burly Hall Monitor.

ETHEL
This isn't over...

ETHEL exits.

BABBIT
Now, everyone... swipe to page 273 in your text Tablets, Chapter 13.

ESTELLE
But there's only 12 chapters.

BABBIT types for a moment.

BABBIT
Look again.

THOMAS' and ESTELLE's tablets ding.

THOMAS
(reading tablet)
"Chapter 13 " Is it time to build a wall between us and the school to the south?"

A bell rings. BABBIT exits.

INTERLUDE

THOMAS and ESTELLE march forward and sing the school song - which is a little more militaristic.

THOMAS AND ESTELLE

ROOSEVELT, WE'RE ROOSEVELT –

A CUT ABOVE THE REST.

ROOSEVELT, WE'RE ROOSEVELT –

PREPARE TO BE IMPRESSED!

MODERN WAYS FOR MODERN TIMES,

WE LEAVE THE OTHERS FAR BEHIND.

WE MARCH INTO THE FUTURE

WITH EFFICIENCY!

ROOSEVELT, ROOSEVELT,

ROOSEVELT ACADEMY!

THOMAS and ESTELLA march off.

SCENE 6

IN THE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM.

MICHIKO revolves on, standing behind podium.. She's a bit sterner than before. She is wearing a black jacket with an armband bearing the logo of LAVA Corp.,, and behind her the school banner now has a more aggressive looking honey badger.

MICHIKO
A few announcements: The 3rd floor boy's bathroom has been repaired, but the 2nd floor library will remain closed while it is converted into the new Fredersen J. Babbit Database Center for Virtual Information. And it turns out dance classes were an inefficient use of space, so the first floor dance studio will now be used for ROTC drill practice. And finally all hail our victorious Honey Badgers!

ESTELLE pops in.

ESTELLE
Hail, Honey Badgers!

MICHIKO
Who crushed the Fighting Lemurs of Jefferson High in the quarter-finals! Forward to the semi-finals, where we shall triumph over the Washington High Meerkats!

ESTELLE cheers in a more threatening way than before.

ESTELLE
Annnnnd.... Death to the Meerkats!

ESTELLE exits.

MICHIKO
Oh, and all hall monitors must pick up their new armbands at the office before Friday. (threatening) Don't forget! (cheerful again) Can't be a monitor without an armband! And now it is my honor to present school board President, Mr. Arthur Quisdedo!

QUISDEDO enters, as MICHIKO exits. QUISDEDO steps behind podium.

QUISDEDO
As I look out at all your eager faces I can't help but think about how much this school has changed. Eleanor Roosevelt High is now Roosevelt Academy - with text tablets, remote teaching, virtual classrooms. With the help of our friends at LAVA Corp. grades are up, class size down, and all the education is virtual! A third of the students don't even have to come to school anymore! When I was elected I promised to bring change to this district. I wanted to set our schools on course for a bright, new future, and with LAVA I hope I've done just that. So it is with a heavy heart that I announce I will not be running for re-election.

BABBIT pops head in.

BABBIT
What?

Rotimi Agbabiaka as QUISDEDO, Lisa Hori-Garcia as MICHIKO
Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

QUISDEDO
(to BABBIT)
I've been offered a job teaching constitutional law at my old college.

BABBIT
But... but... You can't! What about our bright, new future? We're right on course -

QUISDEDO
So I would like to introduce the first candidate for the presidency.

BABBIT
Who?

QUISDEDO
Someone who has shown a complete understanding of my Administration.

BABBIT
Yes?

QUISDEDO
Someone who has worked closely with our schools -

BABBIT begins to understand QUISDEDO is talking about him.

BABBIT

Really?

QUISDEDO

Someone who understands the needs of our students in this digital age-

BABBIT

(humbly)

Thank you!

QUISDEDO

I give you -

BABBIT

(waving to audience)

Hello!

QUISDEDO

Lavina Jones!

LAVINIA enter, waving to crowd.

BABBIT

(stunned)

What? Why didn't you tell me about this?

QUISDEDO

I tried.

BABBIT

You should have tried harder!

LAVINA steps behind podium, addresses the audience.

LAVINIA

As I look out at all your eager faces, I know some of you are wondering: what will happen to the district?

BABBIT

Yes?

LAVINIA

What will happen to this school?

BABBIT

Yes?

LAVINIA

And some of you are wondering what will happen to our partnership with private corporations?

BABBIT

Yes?

LAVINIA
When I'm president my administration will only partner with the best companies, not just whichever one says they're the most... efficient.

BABBIT is suddenly concerned.

QUISDEDO
Thank you, Mrs. Jones. And now -

BABBIT leaps behind podium.

BABBIT
I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT! Everybody... I... surprised as I am, as we all are, by President Quisdedo's decision, but I think it's important that we DON'T PANIC! We can't just pick anybody to replace him.

LAVINIA
I am not just anybody!

BABBIT
But... but you lost the election!

LAVINA is crushed, again, but pulls herself together, re-takes possession of podium.

LAVINIA
THAT... was seven years ago. This time I won't be surprised by a brilliant newcomer like Arthur Quisdedo. The purpose of education is to prepare students to be part of the modern business world. That's what America needs, a generation of entrepreneurs. And when I'm president that's what this district will be all about!

ETHEL enters, in basketball uniform, with ball.

ETHEL
Over my dead body!

LAVINIA
You!

ETHEL
Schools are not factories where you crank out businesspeople!

BABBIT
What's wrong with businesspeople?

ETHEL
(to BABBIT)
Shut up!

ETHEL (CONT'D)
Schools are the incubators of democracy!

LAVINIA
And where in this incubator do they learn how to make a living?

BABBIT
On my text tablets?

Kekio Shimosato as ETHEL Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

LAVINIA
(to BABBIT)
Shut up!

QUISDEDO
Miss Orocuru, this is not the time for this conversation. Miss Jones has just announced her candidacy for the school board presidency.

ETHEL starts to exit, stops herself at door.

ETHEL
And anyone can run?

QUISDEDO
Yes...

ETHEL

Fine!

ETHEL wheels back into the room.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

I'm running for president!

QUISDEDO, LAVINIA AND BABBIT

What?

LAVINIA

(disdainfully)

Oh, you're throwing your sweatband in the ring?

ETHEL

Somebody has to speak for the students and workers of the school!

BABBIT

(ominously)

That sounds like socialism!

LAVINIA

(to BABBIT)

Shut up!

(ominously)

That sounds like socialism!

ETHEL

So what if it does?

BABBIT

I think the most efficient thing to do is -

ETHEL AND LAVINIA

Shut up!

BABBIT reels, but finally can't control himself. He rips of his glasses, and roars in his fully Trumpesque, real self.

BABBIT

NO, YOU SHUT UP!

Everyone is stunned by the sudden change in BABBIT's demeanor.

QUISDEDO

...Mr Babbit?

BABBIT

(as his true, bully self)

God! I am sick and tired of listen to all of you talkin' and talkin and talkin! We got a commie on one side, and a mommy on the other!

QUISDEDO

Fredersen -

BABBIT

And you...! We had a deal: And that deal was I get rich! But if you want to leave, fine. But neither of these two know beans about running things. There's only one person with the know-how to make our schools great again!

QUISDEDO AND ETHEL

Who?

BABBIT

Fredersen J. Babbit!

ETHEL, LAVINIA AND QUISDEDO

You?

BABBIT

I would be the perfect president. Perfect!

LAVINIA

You don't know anything about running schools!

BABBIT

How hard can it be?

QUISDEDO

To be a leader you have to be able to listen!

BABBIT

I'm sorry, what?

ETHEL

Schools aren't businesses! They're where we make citizens!

BABBIT

Citizens are born, not made.

LAVINIA

I have a son in this school -

BABBIT

And all that proves is you know how to have a baby.

LAVINIA

Better to have a baby than little baby hands!

BABBIT

Hey!

ETHEL

Public education doesn't exist to make people like you rich!

BABBIT
Why not? Almost the whole government is run on businessmen like me gettin' rich, and we don't hear no complainin'!

LAVINIA
This is about who is going to be the next president, and it's my turn!

ETHEL
This is a democracy! There are no turns!

BABBIT
Ya know what? It is her turn.. To lose again! Bam!

LAVINIA
Why you pompous, loud-mouthed, self-centered, orange-haired -

ETHEL
Capitalist!

LAVINIA
(to ETHEL)
I don't need your help!

QUISDEDO
Well, it looks like the race for the Presidency has begun! Thank you all for coming to the assembly, and now -

A bell rings.

QUISDEDO *(cont'd)*
Get to class!

Exeunt.

MINI OPERA

THE CAMPAIGN.

Lisa Hori-Garcia as BABBIT, Velina Brown as LAVINIA, Keiko Shimosato Carreiro as ETHEL, Rotimi Agbabiaka as QUISDEDO Photo by Mike Melnyk

We see scenes from the campaign as each candidate makes promises, woos supporters. Each character rotates on. BABBIT rotates on first.

BABBIT
(to crowd)

I'VE BEEN TOLD I'M NOT POLITICALLY CORRECT

IN RESPONSE I TELL 'EM WHERE TO

STICK IT!

SCHOOLS ARE CRUMBLING

FROM MISMANAGEMENT AND BUNGLING,

NOW LET'S COMPARE YOUR CHOICES

ON THIS TICKET -

THERE'S A BRILLIANT CEO

WITH A GOLDEN RESUME,

I'VE WORKED WITH COLDWELL-BANKER, BECHTEL,

AND TIME-WARNER,

UP AGAINST SOME MOMMY

WHOSE KID CAN'T MAKE THE GRADE,

AND SOME AGING COMMIE RAVING

ON A CORNER!

VOTE BABBIT! VOTE BABBIT!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, NOW GRAB IT!

VOTE BABBIT! VOTE BABBIT!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, NOW GRAB IT!

BABBIT rotates off, ETHEL rotates on. ETHEL addresses the crowd.

ETHEL

SO THIS LAVA CORP COMES IN

WITH ALL THEIR BIG IDEAS

THAT HIGH-TECH KOOLAID

THEY'RE DRINKING,

BUT ALL IT REALLY MEANS

IS MORE LITTLE SCREENS

FOR MORE KIDS TO STARE AT

THAT'S NOT THINKING!

THIS COUNTRY NEEDS CITIZENS,

AWAKE AND AWARE,

STANDING UP TO POWER

AND THAT CLASS OF BILLIONAIRES!

OUR SCHOOLS NEED TEACHERS

RESPECTED AND INSPIRED,

OUR KIDS NEED TO BE TAUGHT

NOT JUST WIRED!

ETHEL rotates off, LAVINIA rotates on.

LAVINIA

SEVEN YEARS AGO I RAN FOR THE RIGHT

TO FIGHT FOR OUR SCHOOLS

AND OUR KIDS.

SEVEN YEARS ARE GONE

THINGS HAVE ONLY GOTTEN WORSE

NOW THEIR EDUCATION'S UP FOR BIDS!

BUT THIS IS THE FUTURE

AND WE CAN'T HIDE FROM IT,

WE'RE DOWN IN THE VALLEY,

LET'S CLIMB TO THE SUMMIT!

PARTNERING WITH BUSINESS HAND IN HAND

TOGETHER WE CAN BUILD OUR BRAND!

LAVINIA rotates off, BABBIT rotates on.

BABBIT

SOME PEOPLE COMPLAIN CUZ

WE'RE CUTTING THE ARTS,

FOCUSING ON SCIENCE AND MATH!

THESE CHINESE AND KOREANS
WITH THEIR FIRST GRADE TRIGONOMETRY
AND SO WE'VE GOTTA CATCH UP FAST!

IN THE WORLD I COME FROM,
IT'S EAT OR BE EATEN
WE NEED SMART KIDS WITH HARD SKILLS –
NOT ARTSY-FARTSY CRETINS!

BABBIT rotates off, ETHEL rotates on.

ETHEL

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH
I'D RATHER NOT BE HERE,
I'D RATHER BE IN ROOM 11 TEACHING.
PREPARING OUR KIDS
FOR THE WORLD THEY'LL FACE,
ALL THOSE OLIGARCHS AND SCUMBAGS
OVERREACHING!

FOR 12 SCORE YEARS
DEMOCRACY'S SURVIVED HERE
BUT NOT WITHOUT
AN ONGOING BATTLE!
BETWEEN THE COMMON GOOD,
AND THAT ETERNAL BROTHERHOOD
OF CORPORATE BRO'S
WHO'D HERD US ALL LIKE CATTLE!

ETHEL rotates off, LAVINIA rotates on.

LAVINIA

PRIVATE-PARTY FUNDING IS

THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE,

YOU CAN KICK AND SCREAM ALL YOU LIKE.

I INTEND TO PUT THAT MONEY TO GOOD USE

MAKING SURE THEIR INFLUENCE IS SLIGHT.

THEN WE'LL WALK DOWN THE ROAD

FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW,

BLENDING INNOVATION WITH TRADITION,

WE'LL STEP INTO THE FUTURE, CAUTIOUS AND BOLD

I'M THE ONE TO MANAGE THIS TRANSITION!

BABBIT rotates on.

BABBIT

THAT LADY COULDN'T MANAGE

A HALF A HEAD OF CABBAGE

SHE'D BUCKLE UNDERNEATH THE WEIGHT

I'VE CARRIED.

ALL SHE EVER DID IS RAISE SOME HALF

DELINQUENT KID,

THE BEST THAT I CAN SAY: AT LEAST

SHE'S MARRIED!

ETHEL rotates on. All three candidates are now on stage.

ETHEL

CAN WE KINDLY STICK TO FACTS

NOT AD HOMINEM ATTACKS

ON THE EVE OF THIS CRITICAL DECISION?

BABBIT

LISTEN GRANNY DEAR, WE SPEAK ENGLISH HERE!

AND BESIDES, IT'S GOOD TELEVISION!

LAVINIA

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY IN CLOSING TODAY

IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD WE ENTER,

MUCH IS AT STAKE AND

THE CHALLENGES ARE GREAT

BUT I WILL LEAD US THERE FROM THE CENTER!

BABBIT

VOTE FOR ME!

ETHEL

VOTE FOR ME!

LAVINA

VOTE FOR ME!

BABBIT

PARENTS, FRIENDS, AMERICANS,

THE TIME HAS COME TODAY

TO CLIMB ABOARD THE FUTURE I ENVISION!

WHERE CHILDREN LEARN REMOTELY,

OUT IN THE WORLD

NOT LOCKED AWAY IN SOME ARCHAIC PRISON!

WHERE THE LATEST AND GREATEST

TECHNOLOGY REIGNS,

WHERE THE FAT IS CUT

WHILE THE FLESH REMAINS -

VOTE BABBIT! VOTE BABBIT!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, NOW GRAB IT!

VOTE BABBIT! VOTE BABBIT!

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE, NOW GRAB IT!

BABBIT ends brutal and triumphant.

Exeunt

SCENE 7

IN THE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM.

THOMAS enters, apparently playing on his text tablet. He is now wearing a school uniform. He is too distracted to notice LAVINIA enter, and she is too distracted to know that he is so distracted.

LAVINIA
Thomas, I need you to go to the printer and pick up my flyers -

THOMAS
(distracted by game)
Not right now...

LAVINIA
Do you know there are some young people out there that prefer little old Ethel Orocuru? Progressives! Why doesn't she drop out of the race! She knows she can't win. Then if the progressives didn't want Babbit they'd have no choice but to vote for me...

THOMAS
(still playing)
I'm busy...

LAVINIA
And Babbit! He's not even saying anything and people are cheering. It's all just LAVA Corp.! But if I can get the business crowd, too...

THOMAS
(still playing)
Yeah...

LAVINIA
I need you handing out flyers! This election isn't going to win itself!

THOMAS
I've got work to do.

LAVINIA
Then stop playing that game!

THOMAS
It's not a game - it's my homework!

LAVINIA
Homework?

THOMAS
For American History! And these LAVA Corp. text tablets make everything so easy! It's like I'm right there with Washington, crossing the Delaware... with

Lincoln giving his speech at Gettysburg... with George Bush it's 1968, and he's fighting in Vietnam -

LAVINIA
Thomas, I need you handing out my.... *(stunned)* What was that about George Bush?

THOMAS
And Reagan! What an amazing president!

LAVINIA
(again, stunned)
Ronald Reagan?

THOMAS
The Great Communicator! With his Sword of Truth, defeated the two-headed demon: Communism and Regulations!

LAVINIA
Where are you getting all this?

THOMAS
The LAVA Corp. database!

LAVINIA
Thomas, you can't believe everything you read -

THOMAS
You're always on my back about studying, but now that Mr. Babbit has made homework exciting -

LAVINIA
Just because some rich man in a sharp suit tells you something -

THOMAS
I thought you were all about making money, being "pragmatic - "

LAVINIA
No, no - you still have to want to make the world a better place for everyone.

THOMAS
Like Miss Orocuru says?

LAVINIA
But how's she going to pay for it?

THOMAS
She says there's enough money for education if we just close all the corporate tax loopholes -

LAVINIA
Of course she does. That Red. Some of my biggest supporters are corporations! I need them, we need them -

THOMAS
Babbit says no more corporate regulations will make the world a better place.

LAVINIA
He's only interested in making his world better! It's got to be about everybody -

THOMAS
Like Miss Orocuru says!

LAVINIA
No, no - not like that socialist -

THOMAS
Which is it, mom!?! You can't have it both ways - either it's all about one person getting ahead or it's about what's best for everybody!

LAVINIA
Thomas it doesn't matter what I say, the important thing is that I get elected. Once I'm in office you have to believe I'll do the right thing.

THOMAS
Which right thing Mom, and for who?

LAVINIA
It's not that simple...

THOMAS
For some people it is!

THOMAS starts to exit.

LAVINIA
Where are you going?

THOMAS
To class! At least Babbit and Orocuru know what they stand for.

THOMAS exits. LAVINIA sings a reprise of: A World Out There.

LAVINIA
(stung)
Thomas -

Reprise: "A WORLD OUT THERE"

THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE,

IT'S ALWAYS COMING AT YOU

AND YOU CAN DODGE TO THE LEFT,

AND DUCK TO THE RIGHT

AND HOPE IT GOES PAST YOU.

THERE'S A WORLD OUT THERE

AND YOU JUST GOTTA TO HOLD ON TIGHT

AND MAYBE SOME OF THOSE THINGS

YOU TRY TO BELIEVE TURN OUT TO BE RIGHT.

SCENE 8

IN THE CLASSROOM.

MICHIKO, now in a very severe, militaristic uniform, rotates on. Her entire demeanor is rather fascistic, and she is wearing a black, red, and white armband with the LAVA Corp logo.

Reprise: "ROOSEVELT! O, ROOSEVELT"

MICHIKO

FREDERSON, OH FREDERSON,

YOUR PROFIT MARGINS RISE!

FREDERSON, OUR FREDERSON,

YOUR HAIRPIECE TAKES FIRST PRIZE!

NO MORE WASTE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

NOW CHILDREN LEARN TO FOLLOW RULES,

AND MARCH INTO THE FUTURE WITH EFFICIENCY!

FREDERSON, OH FREDERSON, OH FREDERSON...

MICHIKO (CONT'D)
Students of fourth period American Government! As youth leader I am visiting each class to announce new efficiencies at our school. First: all students will be required to wear their school armbands to all classes. These are to be worn on the left arm, above the elbow. Any student without an armband will be suspended. Next: All students must obey the Hall Monitors. They are there to serve you, and if you disobey them you will be suspended. Finally: All hail our brave warriors who slaughtered the Washington High Meerkats and became district champions! Victory! On to the regional, where we will take no prisoners!! To celebrate our triumph there will be a torchlight parade in the lower yard this evening. Any student not attending will be suspended. Now, as you all know Miss Orocuru is no longer with us... so I would like to introduce your new American Government teacher - Miss Tatianna!

MICHIKO types on text tablet. ESTELLE, wearing a uniform jacket with armband, enters escorting TATIANNA.

TATIANNA
Hello.

MICHIKO
She will be taking over for the rest of the semester.

TATIANNA
Let's talk about government.

THOMAS *enters*.

THOMAS

Sorry I'm late.

TATIANNA

Late is not acceptable. Who is this?

ESTELLE

His name is Thomas.

MICHIKO

He's the one I told you about...

TATIANNA

Ahhh.... The son of woman running against Fredersen... Why doesn't your mother just drop out of the race? She doesn't have a chance to win.

THOMAS

That's what mom says about Miss Orocuru.

TATIANNA

They should both drop out!

THOMAS

In a democracy you can't just demand your opponent not run against you.

TATIANNA

Not yet. Now take seat!

THOMAS starts toward seat, looks at class.

THOMAS

Where's everybody else?

MICHIKO

What do you mean?

THOMAS

The class is almost empty!

MICHIKO

I don't remember there being other students. Do you, Estelle?

ESTELLE

What I remember were not students. I remember lazy, disruptive children who brought down the grade point average of the school.

TATIANNA

They are where they cannot distract, at home, in jail, or back to where they came from. We do not have place for them at Babbit Academy.

THOMAS

Babbit Academy?

ESTELLE
Go, Honey Babbits!

THOMAS
But what happened to Eleanor Roosevelt?

TATIANNA
No questions! Take seat!

THOMAS
Since when is it wrong to ask questions in a school?

TATIANNA
Michiko, give him answer...

velina Brown as ESTELLE, Rotimi Agbabiaka as TOMMY,
Lisa Hori-Garcia as MICHIKO Photo by Mike Melnyk

MICHIKO goes go THOMAS, stares him in the face, punches him in stomach. THOMAS drops to his knees. ESTELLE is taken aback.

TATANNA (CONT'D)
Now sit down.

THOMAS
You can't do this...

TATIANNA
Michiko -

MICHIKO hits THOMAS across the face, and THOMAS falls to the ground. ESTELLE is shocked and frightened. TATIANNA types something into text tablet. After a moment the door opens and two menacing Hall Monitors enter.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
Please take him to office and teach him lesson.

THOMAS exits, with Hall Monitors, MICHIKO, and ESTELLE.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)
(to audience)
Good. Now everyone open your text tablets to chapter 14: "Capitalism - The Highest Form of Democracy."

Bell rings. TATIANNA rotates out.

SCENE 9

IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE.

MICHIKO enters, followed by THOMAS and ESTELLE.

MICHIKO
(to ESTELLE)
Watch him. I'll get the others.

MICHIKO exits.

THOMAS
Others?

ESTELLE
Other students who don't follow the rules.

THOMAS
This is insane! A school can't just have the students beaten!

ESTELLE
(fearful)
As long as the teachers don't do it it's not beating, it's just fights. Every school has fights.

THOMAS
Not like this!

ESTELLE
I'm... sorry. I didn't help you. Before.

THOMAS
They would have beaten you too.

ESTELLE
I know, but still... my Dad says it's always better to cheer for whoever is winning. That way you'll be safe. That's why I'm a cheerleader - so no one will be mad at me.

THOMAS
Just because someone is winning doesn't mean they should win.

ESTELLE
My Dad says the best place to hide is in a crowd.

THOMAS
Even if that crowd is a mob? You can't hide from the real world.

ESTELLE
Not even in a video game? Isn't that what you do?

THOMAS

Yeah... I guess so...

ESTELLE

My Dad says if everyone stopped making waves and did what they were told the world would be a better place.

Pause.

ESTELLE *(cont'd)*

Wow, my Dad is an idiot.

THOMAS

Estelle!

ESTELLE

(with building bravery)

Things don't get better by themselves! And people like Babbit only bully us because we don't stop them. We shouldn't let him push us around! We're... Honey Badgers! (music cue) This is our school, and we need to take it back! (music cue) This is Eleanor Roosevelt High! (music cue)

THOMAS

Yes!

ESTELLE

We should kick his butt!

THOMAS

Whoa, maybe there's a better way-

ESTELLE

(cheering)

We're gonna do what?
We're gonna kick butt!
Goooooo butt kicking!

THOMAS

I don't think that's the answer.

ESTELLE

Why not?

THOMAS

Adults are voting for Babbit because they're scared, and he says he has all the answers. Kicking his butt won't make adults smarter.

ESTELLE

Darn.

THOMAS

I know. They gotta get schooled.

THOMAS and ESTELLE sit quietly for a moment. Then -

ESTELLE
Well, you better get started.

ESTELLE goes to the door, checks the hallway.

THOMAS
On what?

ESTELLE
I'll tell Michiko you escaped.

THOMAS
Thanks! But... what about you?

ESTELLE
I gotta stay so I can help the other students. Don't worry... I'll make sure nothing happens to them. (as a cheer) DEATH... TO THE FASCISTS!

THOMAS
Awe, thanks, Estelle!

THOMAS starts to leave.

ESTELLE
Oh, and Thomas...

THOMAS stops

ESTELLE *(cont'd)*
(innocently romantic)
Yes...

They smile at each other for a moment, then THOMAS exits.

SCENE 10

THE ASSEMBLY ROOM AT BABBIT ACADEMY.

The night of the election. MICHIKO rotates on. She is in a fully militaristic mode now. On the wall is the new school logo - a violent, machine-gun bearing honey badger.

MICHIKO

Patriots! Americans! And others... In a few moments the polls will close, and we will have selected our next school board president! Elections are serious occasions, and what could be more solemn than casting your ballot for a vision of the future? So to celebrate democracy there will be a bouncy house full of barbecue in the lower yard later tonight. But first, in these last few minutes of the campaign, the candidates are each going to make their final statements - no matter how un-American they might be. Speaking of which -

ETHEL enters, as MICHIKO gives her a hostile look, exit. ETHEL goes to podium.

ETHEL

A lot of voters tell me they agree with everything I say, but disagree with the way I say it. I tell them "the quickest way to destroy our public institutions is to hand them over to corporations, and that the best way to destroy our democracy is to hand government to those who will treat it like a business," and they agree, but say "can't you talk about something else?" Our democracy is under attack, and there is no pretty way to say that. And we cannot save it by cooperating with those who profit by destroying it. You have to pick a side. Well, that's all I have to say.

ETHEL gives place to LAVINIA, who first shakes ETHEL's hand.

LAVINIA

I started this campaign because I wanted to create opportunity for our students. I believed if we could harness the power of business we'd help our kids succeed. I wanted to stand for the people, and for business, a public private partnership... but as a wise young man told me it's either about one person getting rich, or it's about what's best for everyone - you can't have it both ways. If elected I'll have to make a choice. All I can say is I hope I make the right one. Thank you.

LAVINIA leaves the podium. A fanfare is heard, and 2 HALL MONITORS enter, and stand like guards on either side of the podium. BABBIT enters, walks to the podium. Cheers are heard.

BABBIT

Bam! I'm not gonna crawl up here like some soviet snail and tell you being rich is bad, or whine about "oooh, I have a choice to make," Women... always complainin'. Must be that time of the month. All this talk about business versus democracy is stupid talk from stupid people. Stupid! People! I mean, just look at me: Fredersen J. Babbit! I'm for the common man -

BABBIT turns to HALL MONITORS.

Keiko Shimosato as ETHEL, Karen Runk as HALL MONITOR 1 Lisa Hori-Garcia as BABBIT, Jenna Stein-Corman as HALL MONITOR 2, Velina Brown as LAVINIA Photo by Mike Melnyk

BABBIT (CONT'D)
Hey, why are you still here?

HALL MONITORS exit.

BABBIT (CONT'D)
I may be rich, but nobody is more common than me!

THOMAS enters.

THOMAS
Stop! Wait!

BABBIT
Oh, look who it is! The baby momma's baby!

THOMAS
You can't vote for him! You don't know what he's done to our school!

BABBIT
You mean made it more efficient?

THOMAS
I mean ruined it! It wasn't the best school in the world, but it was a school! Now it's like a factory.

BABBIT
And what's wrong with that?

THOMAS
(to audience)
Please... please... you gotta listen to me -

LAVINIA
Thomas -

THOMAS
Mom, hush! (LAVINIA is stunned) This isn't about you, about you getting elected, it's about the future! My future! She says we should figure out what we can get, and fight to get it, but you're wrong, mom. It's not about what you can get, it's about fighting for what its your right to have.

LAVINIA
But we have to be sensible -

THOMAS
Who decides what's sensible? People like Babbit?

BABBIT
Bam!

THOMAS
If it were up to them everything would be run for profit, to make them richer.

Speaking to audience, indicating BABBIT

THOMAS (CONT'D)
They don't care about you!

LAVINIA
And do you think I'm one of them?

THOMAS
Are you?

BABBIT
If I'm so bad why do people love me?

THOMAS
Because they didn't have a teacher like Miss Orocuru!

ETHEL
Thomas?

THOMAS

If you adults learned what this country is supposed to be, rather than just listening to whichever rich person or corporation told you what to think, maybe you could have fixed this country up for us kids. Instead you're leaving us a mess! Please, you have to vote for what you want, not for some clown, or what someone else thinks you should settle for!

ETHEL

Oh, my god! Thomas... you were listening!

Song: "QUESTIONS"

THOMAS

I'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME FOOLING AROUND,

SITTIN' IN THE BACK, HAVIN' A LAUGH,

FOOLING AROUND.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES A SLAP IN THE FACE

TO SMACK YOU UP, WAKE YOU UP!

I'M RAISING MY HAND, I'M RAISING MY HAND –

I GOT QUESTIONS!

THOMAS AND ETHEL

WE'RE RAISING OUR VOICE,

YOU LEFT US NO CHOICE,

WE GOT QUESTIONS!

ETHEL

WHERE, AND WHEN, AND WHY WE LET IT GO BY?

THOMAS

HOW, AND WHAT, AND WHO? WELL IT'S UP TO ME

AND IT'S UP TO YOU!

LAVINIA

MAYBE IT'S TOO LATE FOR FOOLING AROUND.

THINKING THIS RIDDLE

HAS AN ANSWER IN THE MIDDLE –

THOMAS, LAVINIA AND ETHEL

THAT'S FOOLING AROUND!

ETHEL

THE ONLY DEFEAT IS SITTING QUIET IN YOUR SEAT

THOMAS, LAVINIA AND ETHEL

LET'S TAKE THIS WHOLE CLASSROOM

OUT IN THE STREET!

THOMAS

I'M RAISING MY HAND,

I'M RAISING MY HAND,

I GOT QUESTIONS!

THOMAS, LAVINIA AND ETHEL

WE'RE RAISING OUR VOICE,

YOU LEFT US NO CHOICE!

Keiko Shimosato-Carreiro as ETHEL, Rotimi Agbabiaka as THOMAS, Velina Brown as LAVINIA Photo by Michael Gene Sullivan

SUDDENLY A voice is heard over the loudspeaker.

V.O.
Parents, teachers, and students! We have a projected winner. Please greet your new school board president... Fredersen J -

BABBIT
BABBIT! Bam!

THOMAS
Wait, what?

LAVINIA
He won.

BABBIT
Because that's what I do! Bam! Bam! Bam!

LAVINIA
It's over.

BABBIT
That's right! It! Is! Over!

LAVINIA, ETHEL, and THOMAS start to leave. Suddenly ETHEL stops, turns.

ETHEL

It is not over!

LAVINIA

Miss Orocuru -

ETHEL

Rome wasn't overthrown in a day!

THOMAS AND LAVINIA

Rome?

ETHEL

The empire! Ruled by the rich, for the rich, with power traded back and forth by a few families until everything crumbled! A nation of slaves and soldiers who worked and died to make the rich even richer!

LAVINIA

Was her class always like this?

THOMAS

Yes!

ETHEL

The important thing is we have to keep fighting! When you are fighting for something you believe in it's never over!

THOMAS

(looking at LAVINIA)

But you have to know what you are fighting for...

LAVINIA

And which side you're on. I'm on your side, Thomas.

ETHEL

(to BABBIT)

And you! Now that you're a public servant...

BABBIT

What?

ETHEL

You work for me!

BABBIT

Is that how that works?

THOMAS

Yes!

ETHEL
And we are going to do everything we can to get you... fired!

ETHEL, THOMAS, and LAVINIA exit. THOMAS turns back for moment.

THOMAS
Bam!

THOMAS exits

BABBIT
Fired? I have never been fired in my life! I'm the one that does the firing, lady! And I ain't rich because I'm printing money in the basement. I'm rich because people keep buying what I'm selling!

BABBIT addresses audience directly

BABBIT (CONT'D)
What are you all looking at? What are you, jealous? Even those who didn't vote for me know, deep in your little red hearts that you want to be me. Powerful, handsome, a winner. And ya know why I win? Because in America capitalism IS the highest form of Democracy. And people like me ain't going nowhere. Today, the classroom, tomorrow, the world! Don't like it? What are you gonna do about it? Bam!

BABBIT rotates off, triumphant.

End of play

Lisa Hori-Garcia as BABBIT Photo by Mike Melnyk

Biographies

BRUCE BARTHOL
Writer, Composer, Lyricist (Eating It, 1600 Transylvania Avenue, Mr Smith Goes To Obscuristan, Veronique of the Mounties,Doing Good, GoodFellas, 2012: The Musical!)

The original bass player with Country Joe and the Fish, Bruce has played and/or recorded with: The San Francisco Mime Troupe, Ronnie Gilbert, Barbara Dane, Pete Seeger, Rosalie Sorrells, Ralph McTell, the Greenbriar Boys, Roy Harper, Formerly Fat Harry, East Bay Sharks, Scoop Nisker, the Energy Crisis, Barrett Nelson, Nina Gerber, Laurie Lewis, Barbara Higby, Paul Dresher, Danny Kalb, Joe McDonald, Ozay Fecht, Dred Scott, Muziki Roberson, Dave Getz, the Original Country Joe Band, Phil Marsh, Will Scarlett, David Bennett Cohen, Greg Douglas, Roy Blumenfeld, The Former Members, Moonlight Rodeo and the Gary Salzman Experience.

Bruce Barthol was the resident songwriter for the Tony Award winning San Francisco Mime Troupe for over three decades. His songs have been recorded by Country Joe and the Fish, the SF Mime Troupe, the Human Condition, Ozay Fecht, the Edlos, the Funky Nixons and the Original Country Joe Band.

Bruce has written for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Borderlands Theatre (Tucson), the Working Theater (NYC), the Curious Theatre (Denver), San Francisco State University, University of Colorado (Boulder), Stanford University, University of Denver, Make-A-Circus, ACT, Arts Council of West Berlin, Intersection of the Arts (SF), Madison Federation of Labor AFL-CIO(Wisconsin), the Dick and Dubya Show, ODC- San Francisco, Stagebridge, Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and the Los Angeles Theater Center, as well as over 35 productions with the SF Mime Troupe. He was a Harburg Scholar at NYU/Tisch where he received an MFA.

Bruce has received two Best Original Score Awards from the SF Bay Drama Critics Circle, a Gold Record for WOODSTOCK, the Media Alliance Golden Gadfly Award and was co-composer of the score for the Oscar nominated documentary FOREVER ACTIVISTS.

ERIN BLACKWELL
Writer (Doing Good)

Erin has a theater degree from Universite de Paris III, has studied with Stella Adler, and stage-managed Charles Ludlam. Co-writer on the Mime Troupe's 2005 summer show, Ms. Blackwell offers the 10-Minute Play CLINIC to raise playwrights' theatrical space-time consciousness.

VELINA BROWN
Lyricist (GodFellas, Making a Killing)

Velina is an award winning actress, singer/songwriter, and director whose artistic home for the past 25 years has been with the Tony and OBIE award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. Other regional theater work includes American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Magic Theatre, Theatre Rhino, Theatreworks, Shotgun Players, New Conservatory Theatre, SF Playhouse, Word for Word and The Denver Theatre Center. Velina has also been featured in numerous television shows, including *Final Witness, Party of Five, Nash Bridges* and *Trauma*, and in films such as *Bee Season, Maladaptive, Playing it Cool* and *Milk*.

Velina is also featured singer on the critically-acclaimed album For Those Who Came After: Songs of the Resistance from the Spanish Civil War, which she recorded with the Brooklyn-based ensemble Barbez, and toured to Europe with the band in 2018. As a singer/songwriter Velina has performed in concerts of her own music around the Bay Area, releasing an EP of her work in 2016. www.velinabrown.com

JON BROOKS
Writer (GodFellas, Making A Killing)

Jon is a KQED News online editor and writer for KQED's daily news blog, News Fix. A veteran blogger, he previously worked for Yahoo! in various news writing and editing roles. He was also the editor of EconomyBeat.org, which documented user-generated content about the financial crisis and recession. Jon is also a playwright whose work has been produced in San Francisco, New York, Italy, and around the U.S. He has written about film for his own blog and studied film at Boston University. He has an MFA in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College.

ELLEN CALLAS
Writer (Eating It, Doing Good, 2012: The Musical!)

In 1976 Ellen co-founded Hit and Run Theater, a political sketch comedy troupe that toured rural northern California for many years. Since joining the Mime Troupe in 1986, she has worked as a writer, actor, director, teacher, production, company & stage manager and project director/teacher for the company's ongoing Youth Theater Project. Ellen also continues her long career as an improvisational theater performer.

EUGENIE CHAN
Writer (Ripple Effect, Schooled)

Eugenie is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter whose work has been produced or developed across the United States, including at the Asian American Theater Company, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Centenary Stage, Crowded Fire, Cutting Ball, East West Players, Group Theater, Houston Grand Opera: HGOco, Magic Theatre, Ma-Yi, Northwest Asian American Theatre, Pan Asian Rep, Perishable, Playwrights Horizons, the Public, San Francisco Mime Troupe, and Thick Description.

Her screenplays have been seen at the Asians on Film, Berlin, Big Apple, Cinestory, Dis-Orient, Mill Valley, San Diego Asian, and Toronto Independent Film Festivals.

Eugenie has B.A. Yale University; M.F.A. New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. She teaches at the University of San Francisco's Performing Arts & Social Justice Department, is playwright emerita at Cutting Ball Theater, and an alumna of New Dramatists and the Playwrights Foundation. She is on the Advisory Board of the Kearny Street Workshop, the nation's oldest Asian American arts organization. eugeniechantheater.org

AMOS GLICK
Composer, Lyricist *(Showdown at Crawford Gulch, Doing Good)*

An SFMT collective member from 1997 - 2007, Amos appeared in 15 productions with the Troupe, as well as teaching and directing in SFMT's Summer Workshop. Amos created and performed (with fellow Trouper Ed Holmes) The Dick & Dubya Show: A Republican Outreach Cabaret, created the vocal improv troupe Tonal Chaos, and was a company member of BATS Improv.

Amos left SFMT to clown in Le Rêve, a water/circus spectacle in Las Vegas, and started his own late night variety show called OK, OK the amos glick variety show which won "Best Budget Show" in 2014 (Seven Magazine).

Amos has taught Physical Theater and Improvisation workshops across the U.S., Italy, Germany was an Artist in Residence at The SF School of The Arts. and taught acting workshops for the French National Synchronized Swimming Team and the USA Junior National Synchronized Swimming Team.

Other acting credits include roles with The Alternative Theatre Ensemble, SF Shakespeare Festival, Marin Shakespeare Company, The Tenderloin Opera Company and The New Pickle Circus, The Management, The Daredevil Chicken Club, The Gazillionaire Show, Klezmermania, Bread and Puppet, The 1230 Clown Show and others. He wrote, produced and stared in the multiple award-winning short film A MAN WAKES UP. Other film & TV credits include: THE VILLAGE BARBERSHOP, OPAL, AROUND THE FIRE and NASH BRIDGES. In his musical life he played guitar and mandolin with Koocheekoo in Las Vegas and played with Charity Kahn & The JAMband and The Bastard Brothers in San Francisco. He released an EP of original music under the band name Ponder in 2010. amosglick.com

JOAN HOLDEN
Writer (Doing Good)

Was principal playwright from 1967to 1999, for the San Francisco Mime Troupe, where she wroye or co-wrote over thirty plays Her work is solidly political, but instead of delivering her messages through serious dialogue and realism, Holden has opted to use comedy as a means of conveying her thoughts, believing that by using laughter to keep a certain distance from the subject, she can more clearly depict the social roles of the characters as well as their places in history. Joan has also written for the American Conservatory Theatre, The Mark Taper Forum, as well as had her shows tour Off-Broadway, the Kennedy Center, Europe, Asian, and the Middle

East. Her published work includes her critically-acclaimed stage adaptation of Barbara's Ehrenreich Award. Joan was given the off-Broadway Award by the Village Voice, 1973, and the Rockefeller grant in 1985

JOSH KORNBLUTH
Writer (Mr. Smith Goes To Obscuristan)

As a kid growing up in New York, ever since he and his dad caught a performance of The Dragon Lady's Revenge in a Greenwich Village church, Josh Kornbluth dreamed of running away and joining the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Unfortunately, due to his limited skills, he ended up doing mostly solo shows instead -- among them, Red Diaper Baby, The Mathematics of Change, Ben Franklin: Unplugged, Citizen Josh and -- most recently -- The Bottomless Bowl. Along with his brother Jacob, he has adapted two of his monologues -- Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes -- into feature films that have been distributed nationally. For two years Josh hosted an interview program on public-TV station KQED in San Francisco, cleverly titled The Josh Kornbluth Show. Most of his solo pieces have been collected into two books (including audio-), titled Red Diaper Baby and Ben Franklin: Unplugged ... and Other Comic Monologues. Recently, Josh has been a visiting lecturer at Stanford University, where he's been teaching a course called "The Ethics of Storytelling." He is currently a visiting scholar in the Neurology Dept. of the University of California at San Francisco, and the Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute, as well as Hellman Visiting Artist at UCSF's Memory and Aging CenterJosh lives in Berkeley with his wife and son. joshkornbluth.com

JEFFREY MORRIS
Writer (Doing Good)

Morris worked in performing arts production, management, and operations for a variety of nonprofit organizations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Washington D.C. Notable companies include Actors' Equity Association (labor relations), ODC Theater (dance presenting), Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles (community choral organization), the San Francisco Mime Troupe (political musical theater), The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (arts presenter), and Woolly Mammoth Theater Company (new works) to name a few. Jeffrey currently works for the National Center for Arts and Technology.
Morris holds a Master of Arts Management degree from Carnegie Mellon University as well as a Bachelor's in Playwriting and Performing Arts from the University of California at Santa Cruz. He enjoys spending as much time as possible traveling, exploring nature, and consuming art.

IRA MARLOWE
Composer, Lyricist (Showdown at Crawford Gulch, Ripple Effect, Freedomland, Schooled)

Marlowe is proprietor of The Monkey House, a 65-seat performance space/recording studio in Berkeley, CA, and teaches songwriting, both in classes and private coaching sessions. He also runs Brainy Tunes, his own kids' music label, which in the past five years has released six CDs and won the coveted Parents' Choice and Mr. Dad Awards.
2016 Ira took on the challenge of writing and recording (in elaborate fashion) a new song every week. In the process he joked that all a songwriter needs is "a deadline and an audience" and

developed weeklysong.bandcamp.com, a website which offers both to aspiring songwriters. Ira is also a Professor of Songwriting at the University of California, Berkeley. iramarlowe.com

PAT MORAN
Composer, Lyricist (Doing Good, GodFellas, Making A Killing, Red State, Too Big To Fail, Posibilidad, 2012: The Musical!, For The Greater Good, Oil and Water)

Writer (Oil and Water)

Pat worked with the Mime Troupe from 2005-2013 as a collective member, musician, youth theatre project teacher, composer, lyricist, and Music Director. Recent credits include- A Midsummer Night's Dream at Shakespeare's Globe (Musical Director / Musician), 946 – The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips (Kneehigh, original cast and UK and US tours as Musical Director/Musician), Tristan & Yseult (Kneehigh / US Tour); Sleeping Beauty (Bristol Old Vic) and An Audience with Meow Meow (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Pat has written original music and lyrics for over a dozen professionally produced theatre productions and received an MFA Performer Composer degree from CalArts. patmoranmusic.com

TANYA SHAFFER
Writer (Ripple Effect)

Tanya Shaffer is the author of the book Somebody's Heart is Burning: A Woman Wanderer in Africa, the plays Baby Taj and Brigadista, and the solo performances Let My Enemy Live Long! and Miss America's Daughters, as well as the one-act play "The People in the Park." She also co-authored the children's show "On the Other Side" (with Alisa Peres) and the San Francisco Mime Troupe musical "Social Work." Her stories and essays have appeared on Salon.com and in numerous anthologies. As an actress, she has worked with the California Shakespeare Festival, the Old Globe Theatre, TheatreWorks, and many others. She is currently writing the script and lyrics for the musical The Fourth Messenger, with composer Vienna Teng. Tanya lives in Michigan with her husband, social entrepreneur David Green, and their two beautiful, boisterous boys. She hopes, one day, to have a dog. tanyashaffer.com

JASON SHERBUNDY
Composer (1600 Transylvania Avenue, Mr. Smith Goes To Obscuristan, Veronique of the Mounties)

Jason worked in opera with West Edge Opera, Livermore Opera, Island City Opera, West Bay Opera, City Opera Vancouver, Cinnabar Opera, Berkeley Opera and Lyric Theater of San José. As an orchestra pianist he has played with the Santa Rosa Symphony, Merced Symphony, Napa Symphony, Espressivo Orchestra, and Albany Symphony, and has accompanied Masterworks Chorale, Pacific Masterworks Chorus, the First Presbyterian Church of San Mateo, and Sonoma State University Chorus.
Jason spent many years music directing and playing musical theater in the greater Bay Area at Sonoma State University, Pacific Alliance Theater, College of Notre Dame, Summer Repertory Theater, Larkspur Café Theater, Cinnabar Theater, Pacific Repertory Theater, Novato Community

Players, West Valley Civic Light Opera, Chabot College, TheaterWorks, Berkeley Repertory Theater, and Teatro Zinzanni.

Following his time in the Bay Area, he worked for over a decade on professional musical theater shows, including touring shows coming through San Francisco, North American tours, and three years on Broadway. He has been involved with shows such as Porgy and Bess; A Chorus Line; The Lion King; Chicago; Wicked; Catch Me If You Can; Anything Goes; Caroline, or Change; Mamma Mia; On A Clear Day; Bring It On; Rent; White Christmas; and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. He was also the music director and pianist for Tom Wopat for several cabaret shows throughout the United States.

Jason has appeared on the Tony Awards and the Late Show with David Letterman, and he was the on-screen rehearsal pianist "Larry" on NBC's SMASH, where he was also the on-set assistant to Marc Shaiman, vocal coach to Uma Thurman, and piano coach to Christian Borle and Jeremy Jordan. He can be heard playing principal piano and keyboard on the Grammy-nominated New Broadway Cast Recording of A Chorus Line and on the Original Broadway Cast Recording of Catch Me If You Can.

KEIKO SHIMOSATO CARREIRO
Writer (Doing Good)

Keiko holds a BFA in Interdisciplinary Arts and an MA in Multimedia from the University of Iowa. She arrived in San Francisco with the Horse Drawn, Caravan Stage Company of Canada. She has been an actor, designer and director for the Mime Troupe since 1987. Keiko has designed costumes for many other Bay Area Theater companies including, Berkeley Rep, S.F. Shakespeare in the Parks, The Asian American Theater Company, African American Shakespeare Company, Crowded Fire and Custom Made Theater as well as the San Francisco Mime Troupe. She has directed City for Sale and Gotta Getta Life for the Mime Troupe, and Cowboy versus Samurai for the Asian American Theater Company.

MICHAEL GENE SULLIVAN
Writer (Eating It. 1600 Transylvania Avenue, Mr. Smith Goes To Obscuristan, Veronique of the Mounties, Showdown at Crawford Gulch, GodFellas, Making A Killing, Red State, Too Big To Fail, Posibilidad, 2012: The Musical!, For The Greater Good, Ripple Effect, Freedomland, Schooled)

Michael is an award-winning actor, director, and playwright, whose plays have been produced at theaters throughout the United States, in Greece, England, Scotland, Spain, Columbia, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, as well as at the Melbourne International Arts Festival (Australia), the International Festival of Verbal Art (Berlin), The Spoleto Festival, (Italy), and the The Hong Kong Arts Festival. Since 2000 Michael has been Resident Playwright for the San Francisco Mime Troupe, where he has acted in, directed, written or co-written over 33 plays, as well as performing at the American Conservatory Theater,, California Shakespeare Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Theatreworks, and other regional theaters. He is also a Resident Playwright for the Playwrights Foundation, and has been awarded a 2017 residency at the Djerassi Arts Center. Michael's non-Mime Troupe plays include the award winning all-woman farce Recipe, Red Carol, (his activist adaptation of Dickens' A Christmas Carol), his critically acclaimed one person show,

Did Anyone Ever Tell You-You Look Like Huey P. Newton?, and his award-winning stage adaptation of George Orwell's 1984, which opened at Los Angeles' Actors' Gang Theatre under the direction of Academy Award winning actor Tim Robbins. 1984 has since been produced on five continents,, is published in the United States, Canada, and Spain, and has been translated into four languages. michaelgenesullivan.com